

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF LESOTHO SECONDARY SCHOOLS' TEACHERS
ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

By

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DECLARATION

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Abstract

Scholars emphasise the pivotal role that teacher perceptions play in the success of inclusive education (IE). Using Bourdieu's (1985-1999) three conceptual tools of habitus, field and capital as a theoretical framework, this qualitative case study was designed to investigate secondary school teachers' perceptions of IE – particularly with regard to the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools in the Maseru District of Lesotho. Data were collected using rural and urban focus-groups' interviews. After analysing the data using categorical indexing, and discourse and comparative analysis methods, seven overriding themes emerged: teacher philosophical understanding of IE, teacher inclusion experiences and challenges, teacher classroom practices, teacher opinions about IE, key elements of IE, advantages of IE, and disadvantages of IE.

Both focus groups demonstrated similar, but diverse conceptualisations of IE: as an integration movement requiring students to adapt to the school environment; as a segregation movement justifying special schools for students with severe disabilities; and as an education-for-all movement requiring that schools adapt to individual learner needs. The teachers understood that IE had social benefits for learners who could not reap its academic benefits. They used their traditional nurturing approaches to teach learners with different abilities – such as by memorisation of concepts and maximising peer interactions for the purpose of peer tutoring. However, the teachers' insistence on corporal punishment and forcing learners to speak English in schools seemed to compromise their inclusion efforts. The study also found that despite the culturally influenced, positive and nurturing instincts of teachers in relation to supporting the education of children with disabilities, they were confronted with numerous challenges. These included: lack of knowledge and skills to effectively implement IE, lack of resources, lack of collaborative support from parents and government, and lack of incentives to boost their morale.

It is recommended that teachers be equipped with theoretical knowledge of IE and with practical skills to implement it. Pre-service and in-service training was recommended in this regard. It is also recommended that all stakeholders in

Lesotho secondary education bring together their resources, expertise, knowledge and enthusiasm – in an effort to make IE in Lesotho both successful and sustainable.

Key words: Lesotho; inclusive education (IE); integration; segregation; disability; assessment of disability; assessment of achievement; special educational needs; mainstreaming; curriculum adaptation.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

DFID – Department of International Development

EFA – Education for All

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IE – Inclusive Education

IEP – Individual Education Plan

JC – Junior Certificate

LGCSE – Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education

MOET – Ministry of Education and Training

NGO – Non-Government Organisation

OBE – Outcome-Based Education

PSLE – Primary Leaving School Examinations

SCF – Save the Children

SEN – Special Educational Needs

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter objectives

This chapter provides background to the study and exposes the problem statement, aim, and objectives of the study. These are followed by the research questions, hypotheses, and delimitations and limitations. There is a section on the significance of this study, which is followed by a brief outline of the methods used for the gathering and management of data. The terminologies (terms) and concepts relating to this study are discussed, and, finally, a summary of this chapter is presented.

1.1 Background

In recent years, many countries have prioritised the education of children with disabilities, together with their peers, in mainstream schools. Consequently, an increased number of learners with disabilities are studying in regular schools, together with their peers who lack disabilities. This concept is commonly referred to as 'inclusive education' or IE. It is based on the principle that all children, regardless of ability or disability, have a basic right to be educated alongside their peers in their neighbourhood schools (UNESCO, 1994). This research investigated Lesotho secondary school teacher perceptions relating to inclusive education (IE) within the Maseru District of Lesotho. It used a case-study interview approach, using a sample of 12 secondary schools, and focused on how teachers from these schools conceptualised IE in the context of their schools. Particular reference was made to inclusion with regard to the education of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs, in mainstream schools.

Baguma and Aheisibwe (2011:31) argue that "Education is a torch that can illumine Africans and their Dark Continent". The term "dark" is understood to mean "poor" in this context. Education is understood to have potential to challenge issues of destitution in African countries. This idea is shared by Miles (2002), among others – who argues that education is a tool for empowering

people with disabilities. There is also an assumption that poverty and disability are intertwined. Thus, families that are struggling with disability always 'swim in a pool of poverty'. This is believed to emanate from several factors or challenges, including negative attitudes, problems with mobility, earning power, and child-care problems (Miles, 2005; Stubbs, 2002; Department for International Development [DFID], 2010) – to mention but a few. In other words, because of its poverty, Africa is expected to have a comparatively higher number of people with disabilities. In effect, McConkey and Bradley (2007) argue that over 80% of children with disabilities live in less-developed regions of the world, and Africa is considered to be among them.

The education of children with disabilities in African countries – for example Lesotho, Ghana and South Africa – is considered to be Eurocentric, like all other education systems in Africa (Magweva, 2007; Miles, 2002; Mukhopadhyay, Molosiwa and Moswela, 2009; Mukhopadhyay, Nenty and Abosi, 2012; Nsamenang and Tchombe, 2011). Thus, the form of education has followed (and continues to follow) the pattern set by Western countries. The pattern runs from exclusion to segregation, then integration, and finally "limited inclusion" (Mcdonald, 2005:2). This sequence is not necessarily the best option for poorer countries, because it is considered to be time and resource wasting (Stubbs, 2002). Segregated education entails educating children with disabilities in special schools, or at home. On the other hand, under integrated education, children with disabilities attend special classes or units within mainstream schools. IE calls for a system in which children with disabilities learn effectively in mainstream schools, and where the whole system has been changed to meet all children's needs (section 1.7).

In Lesotho, the national policy on IE was formulated in 1989. The seven goals of the policy statement are that the Ministry of Education would:

- Advocate the integration of people with disabilities into the mainstream school system.
- Establish resource centres to assess learner needs, and prepare them for integration.

- Ensure that all people with disabilities complete the seven-year primary education.
- Establish a functional, itinerant, special education team to support mainstream teachers.
- Create a network of services that would enable the education of people with disabilities.
- Respect the rights of children with disabilities not to be displaced – but rather to live with parents or legal guardians.
- Include special education programmes in pre-service teacher training (Ministry of Education, 1989).

During the 1989 period, only a small number of children with disabilities were accessing any kind of services, and there was barely any expertise in the area of special or IE (Miles, 2000). Subsequently, there has been much networking, lobbying and awareness-raising through the help of the Save the Children Fund (SCF). The main task of SCF included encouraging partnership among parents, professionals, non-governmental organisations (for example the Norwegian Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities [NFU] and the Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons [LSMHP]), and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Lesotho. This resulted in MOET commencing with a pilot project on “Inclusive Education” in eight primary schools and two secondary schools (mostly in rural areas) from each of the 10 districts of Lesotho (Miles, 2000).

Since then, several domestic legal frameworks on the rights of children with disabilities to quality education have been formulated. These include the Education Act of 2010: section 4(2) (b) affirms the obligation to include children with disabilities in the Lesotho education system. The Child Protection and Welfare Act of 2011 also expresses the right of children with disabilities to have an inclusive education. In addition, Lesotho has the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005–2015 and the Special Education Unit, which are focused on achieving IE for people with disabilities. However, it is worth noting that none of the above provide for the role(s) that non-teaching professionals (e.g. psychologists and psychotherapists) can play in an inclusive setting.

Johnstone and Chapman (2009), Eriamiatoe (2013) and Mosia (2014) reveal a chasm between the legal frameworks and IE implementation in Lesotho schools. This is a challenge and it helped motivate the current study. Mukhopadhyay *et al.* (2009) and Foster and Thompson (2013) argue that teacher knowledge of IE can play a major role when implementing IE in schools. Consequently, it would be prudent to investigate Lesotho secondary teacher knowledge of IE.

Inclusive secondary schools are very scarce worldwide. Not even in developed countries (e.g. the United Kingdom [UK] or Sweden) is ample literature or practical examples of IE at this level of education readily available. This is partly due to the secondary schools (and higher education institutions) being examination-oriented (International Disability and Development Consortium [IDDC], 1998; Ntho, 2013). Lerotholi (2001) and Ntho (2013) argue that examination orientation begins at primary schools in Lesotho. Evaluating or judging the success of a school exclusively on the basis of academic results may however run contrary to notions of inclusion, and can discourage teaching practices that allow for student diversity (Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, Farrell, Frankham, Gallannaugh, Howes and Smith, 2006; Howes, Booth and Frankham, 2005).

Inclusive Lesotho secondary schools are however inevitable, as the 1987 IE policy in Lesotho was ultimately intended to cut across all higher levels of schooling in Lesotho (Miles, 2002; Johnstone and Chapman, 2009) – which is why the current study was pertinent. It is imperative to establish how Lesotho secondary school teachers understand IE in the context of their schools or country. An establishment of teachers' understanding of IE will hopefully help them to continue with practices that harmonise with IE, while improving on the negative ones (if there are any). It is hoped that this will be achieved by facilitating a process whereby teachers will be supported to critically examine their own situation with regard to IE in more depth, with rigour, and in a systematic way.

The importance of investigating teacher knowledge of IE is highlighted by, *inter alia*, Fraser-Seeto, Howard and Woodcock (2015) and Mukhopadhyay (2013).

They argue that research on knowledge of IE is important, particularly at a time when national governments are planning for and/or implementing IE and paying particular attention to the educational needs of different groups of people which were previously excluded by school systems. Such research could provide information on the processes and materials that a school can adopt or adapt, in order to ensure cultural relevance. As was anticipated by the researcher, the results of the current study have called for propositions about development programme(s) aimed at improving the understanding of IE by Lesotho (secondary school) teachers (section 5.3).

In Lesotho, much work and studies on IE have been done at primary-school level. Johnstone and Chapman (2009) found that IE implementation in Lesotho primary schools was still a challenge – despite MOET’s efforts to gradually spread it throughout the country. As per these authors, this can be mostly ascribed to MOET’s narrow focus on the concept, and looking to address only particular challenges:

“The extent to which Lesotho’s inclusive education policy can be said to be effective depends, in large part, on which problem the government and Education Ministry’s personnel were trying to solve” (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009:143-144).

The most recent studies in Lesotho are those of Eriamiatoe (2013) and Mosia (2014), who both identified a gap between legal frameworks (domestic and international) on IE – and the actual practice in Lesotho schools. Eriamiatoe (2013) ascribed this to a shortage of human and material resources. She also pointed out that insufficient support for inclusive approaches by MOET was another possible contributing factor: “These few facilities [for implementing IE in Lesotho schools] are usually made available at the insistence of disabled people’s organisations” (Eriamiatoe, 2013:2). According to Mosia (2014), another possible contributory factor could be MOET’s sluggishness in terms of developing a policy on special needs.

1.1.1 The country Lesotho

Lesotho is a small country with a population of about two million people, comprising mostly Basotho people whose language is Sesotho. Harsh winters and high altitudes make much of the country inaccessible in winter (Khatleli, Mariga Phachaka and Stubbs, 1995b, 1996). Lesotho was a British Protectorate for over 100 years until independence in 1966. The country is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa, and its economy and stability are inextricably linked to South Africa. A quarter of the Basotho male workforce has sought employment in South Africa. This has resulted in nearly 30% of families having no male head – and consequently women have taken on an increasingly prominent role in Basotho society. However, recent retrenchment of mineworkers from South African mines has contributed to a nearly 50% unemployment level in Lesotho, and “With new developments in South Africa, Lesotho's future as an independent country is uncertain, and foreign donor agencies seem to lose interest [in it]” (Stubbs, 1995a:87).

1.1.2 Formal education in Lesotho

Prior to being a British protectorate, Basotho relied solely on initiation (or circumcision) schools for the formal education of Basotho youth. Male adolescents attended an initiation school in order to be circumcised and to receive training on skills such as sewing for shields and clothing, agriculture, hunting, and livestock farming. They also received education on respect; patriotism; being secretive; and being responsible men, warriors and responsible fathers who do not divorce their wives. On the other hand, female adolescents were formally taught about womanhood (e.g. resilience strategies in respect of family challenges), sex-related issues, behaviour towards men, respect, and domestic and agricultural activities. They were also taught to be secretive and to resolve conflicts in peacefully (Lesitsi, 1990). There is no evidence of enrolment (or lack thereof) of children with disabilities into these traditional schools. Nevertheless, considering that the teachings in these schools focused on an oral method and the learning of practical skills – it is possible that most children who we today refer to as having special educational needs, indeed coped well.

Initiates were expected to be extremely secretive about the events and teachings that occurred in these schools. Therefore, it is logical to think that children who, due to their disabilities, could not be entrusted to keep this secret, would not have been allowed to take part in this kind of schooling. Perhaps the lack of transparency led to these schools not being favoured by the missionaries and protectorate authorities (Lesitsi, 1990).

Although about 78% and 58% of children in Lesotho attend primary and secondary schools respectively, there are very high drop-out and repeater rates. Girls outnumber boys in schools because boys are required for herding. Schools lack basic infrastructure such as classrooms, latrines and water – particularly in the poorer mountain areas. Other problems include overcrowding, exceptionally high pupil-teacher ratios (up to 100:1), unaffordable fees, and the poverty of parents. The Church (mainly the Roman Catholic Church, Lesotho Evangelical Church, and Anglican Church of Lesotho) has a very strong influence in Lesotho, and makes an important contribution to both the health and education systems (Lerotholi, 2001; Shafika, 2007). English is the medium of instruction in all schools (except at elementary stages: lower primary grades).

Lesotho's education system includes early childhood care and development (ECCD) which lasts for about three years [ages 3-6], primary education which lasts seven years [ages 6-13], junior secondary education which lasts three years [ages 13-16], senior secondary (high school) education which lasts two years [ages 16-18], and tertiary education which lasts three to six years. Forms A through C – the first three years of junior secondary school – lead to the Junior Certificate (JC), which is administered by MOET. Forms D and E, the last two years of senior secondary school, prepare students for the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE). Examinations are at the Ordinary level. Primary education is free, but secondary and tertiary educations are not free (Jeans and Kay, 2014; Ntho, 2013; Lerotholi, 2001). Most teachers in Lesotho secondary schools do not have a formal training in IE, because programmes focusing on IE have been introduced very recently in Lesotho teacher training institutions (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009).

1.1.3 Disability in Lesotho

Basotho society is based on an extended family structure which incorporates a complex system of responsibilities and reciprocities. Children belong to and are cared for by the whole family (and even the entire society) – not just biological parents. This structure is supported and perpetuated by Basotho indigenous education and customary law. The traditional beliefs and practices surrounding disability are a complex mixture emanating from practical experience, the need for survival, spiritual beliefs, and traditional attitudes to health (Stubbs, 1995b).

When a visibly ‘disabled’ child is born, this is traditionally perceived as being negative and the mother is held responsible. However, in order to please the “spirits” and to prevent greater misfortune, the mother makes it her duty to care for the child. Several coping strategies are used, and include non-formal and informal education (see section 1.7) and focusing on self-care activities supported by the extended family – as social integration and responsibility taking are highly valued in Basotho societies (Khatleli *et al.*, 1995).

According to the 2006 population census, 3.7% of the population in Lesotho is considered to have a disability of one form or another, and approximately 1.5% of the population aged 0 to 19 years has a disability. Amputations of digits or limbs, congenital paralysis or lameness, blindness, deafness, mental illness and mental retardation are the most frequent types of disability in the population (Shafika, 2007).

1.2 Problem statement

Considering that IE is a new concept in Lesotho teacher training institutions, it is possible that Lesotho secondary school teachers have limited knowledge and understanding of IE. On the other hand, it was argued in the previous section that teacher knowledge is considered fundamental to successful implementation of any related educational programme. Fraser-Seeto *et al.* (2015) concurs – claiming that the inclusive classroom philosophy and environment is shaped by, among other things, teacher knowledge of IE. It is also contested that “[e]nsuring that ... teachers have a basic understanding of inclusive teaching is the best

investment that can be made” (Mittler, 2000:137). Thus, teacher understanding or conceptualisation of IE is crucial for the success of IE in schools (or the failure thereof). In other words, if teacher knowledge of IE is contrary to or incompatible with the national policies on this subject, then IE implementation will unlikely succeed or produce anticipated outcomes.

As argued before, Eriamiatoe (2013) and Mosia (2014) revealed some discrepancies in Lesotho schools’ implementation of IE. These findings corroborate Johnstone and Chapman’s (2009) discovery that MOET’s policy on IE and also its implementation in local schools, have been incompatible. Hence, it becomes essential to establish how Lesotho secondary school teachers conceptualise IE, as this has not been done previously. According to the literature, secondary school teacher conceptualisation(s) of this concept may have a direct impact on the outcomes of its implementation.

It is noteworthy that most studies have reported a diverse conceptualisation of IE by teachers. Hodgkinson (2006) reports that 40% of participants conceptualised it as “education for all”. These participants believed that all mainstream schools should be inclusive. In contrast, according to Leung and Mak (2010), 60.8% of participants interpreted IE as education involving students with special educational needs in mainstream schools and programmes. Sadler (2005) found that 87.6% of participating teachers reported having a “limited” or “very limited” knowledge of IE. None of these teachers rated themselves as having sufficient knowledge of IE. Likewise, according to Gaad and Khan (2007), participating teachers had insufficient knowledge and training to address the needs of students in integrated settings. These teachers considered that their limited knowledge influenced their attitudes – implying that lack of knowledge may be an attitudinal *and* practical barrier to the implementation of IE.

Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001) found that teachers’ lack of knowledge of issues related to IE in South Africa. The teachers in the current study felt they were not adequately prepared or equipped to teach in inclusive classrooms as a result of their lack of training, lack of time, large classes, and lack of relevant teaching experience. The teachers felt they had a lack of competence because of

inadequate pre-service or in-service training in relation to IE – and this caused them stress. Therefore, it is vital to discover how IE is conceptualised by Lesotho secondary school teachers. This study will aim to inform MOET about possible development strategies to ensure that IE in Lesotho (secondary) schools becomes fruitful and sustainable.

1.3 Aim

This study aimed to investigate Lesotho secondary school teacher perceptions (knowledge, understanding, conceptualisation) of IE, and the implications for classroom practices – in order to provide an Afrocentric conceptualisation of IE and to propose improvement(s) (if needs be).

1.3.1 Objectives

Based on the above aim, the objectives of the study were to:

- Investigate how Lesotho secondary school teachers conceptualise IE, by conducting focus-group interviews;
- Identify from the guided discussions, the degree to which teacher conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack thereof) guide or inform their practical approaches to the education of children with disabilities in their mainstream schools;
- Establish how the teacher conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack thereof) are similar or different – by analysing the findings; and
- With reference to the literature (chapter two), investigate the relationship between teacher conceptualisation(s) of IE and the relevant literature. Through this, the researcher will highlight areas of agreement or similarity, disagreement, and confusion.

The accomplishment of the above objectives relied upon answers to the following research questions:

1.3.2 Research questions

What does IE mean to Lesotho secondary schools?:

- How do teachers in Lesotho secondary schools conceptualise IE?
- How do(es) their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack thereof) translate into their teaching approaches?
- To what degree is/are their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack thereof) similar or different?
- How do(es) their conceptualisation(s) of IE relate to the literature on this subject?

1.3.3 Hypotheses

Qualitative research generates hypotheses, while quantitative tests them. Nonetheless, Maguvhe (2005) found that there may be valid reasons to formulate (a) hypothesis/es for a qualitative enquiry. The reasons provided by this author include:

- a) Hypotheses are good and valuable tools for both the verification and falsification of one's beliefs or suspicions.
- b) Hypotheses provide a platform for researchers to work from.
- c) Through formulating hypotheses, researchers can establish the true value of the study, its applicability, consistency and neutrality.

Uncommon as it may be for qualitative investigations to test hypotheses, the researcher found that the above reasons apply to the current study, and therefore he formulated hypotheses for the current study:

Lesotho secondary school teachers, and in particular those who teach (or have taught) children with disabilities and/or special educational needs have:

- a unique conceptualisation of IE;
- conceptualisations of IE, which are different;

- conceptualisations of IE that inform and influence their teaching approaches;
- conceptualisations of IE that are compatible with the literature on this subject.

1.4 Delimitations

According to Winter and O'Raw (2010), IE is very broad in terms of its scope and approaches. It can take a formal, non-formal and/or informal approaches (section 1.7) – which are not mutually exclusive. Inclusive schools pave the way for an inclusive society and vice versa (DFID, 2010; Miles, 2002). Therefore, it is crucial that IE be clearly understood in its broad sense. Moreover, IE implementation in schools will inevitably influence its spread across the entire society. In this study, IE was considered simply in the context of schools – thus only through a formal approach. In other words, it might run short of some potentially enriching IE practices which happen outside the school setting.

Furthermore, IE should be understood beyond catering for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. There are so many factors that can lead to exclusion from schools, including: disability, special educational needs, poverty, gender, race, ethnicity, language, care status, sexuality, and religion. One major reason for the broader approach to IE is that many of these factors operate in combination and can result in marginalisation or exclusion. Focusing on a single factor such as disability in isolation, has the potential to lead to faulty assumptions (Topping and Maloney, 2005; Gerschel, 2003). In particular, poverty is a major exclusionary factor in Lesotho. The case of Masetlaokong, a village on the outskirts of Maseru, sums up Lesotho's overall scenario:

“On the morning of the launch of compulsory (primary) education in June 2011, the Prime Minister and [the] Minister of Education visited two families whose ten school-age children were out of school. These were orphans whose guardians were so poor that, despite the elimination of fees, they still could not afford uniforms for these children to go to school ... Although schools cannot expel learners who are not wearing a school uniform, many poor children are embarrassed to go to school wearing torn and dirty clothes” (Ntho, 2013:32).

It has been argued that disability and poverty are inextricably linked. In other words, excluding/including children with disabilities is tantamount to excluding/including poor children. This is because these two groups are faced with similar challenges and opportunities. In the same manner, children who have special educational needs are most prone to exclusion (National Center on Inclusive Education, 2011). Dawson (2006) informs researchers to strive for practically feasible research studies. To accomplish this, this study focused mainly on only two of the above-mentioned possible exclusionary factors: disability and special educational needs. Some authors (e.g. Farrell, 2004) are very cautious of the broad approaches to IE-related research, – and have expressed concern they may result in the needs and requirements of pupils with special educational needs and those of other specific groups, being overlooked.

Some teachers might also have not taught children with disabilities and/or special educational needs – but may still have knowledge of IE. Knowledge of IE can be acquired in many ways – formal education, non-formal education, and informal education, to mention just a few. However, the literature (e.g. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000) suggests that irrespective of the mode through which knowledge of IE has been acquired, the experience of interacting with children with disabilities is an added advantage in this regard. Consequently, this study targeted only teachers with experience in teaching a class which has some children with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

Finally, the study was conducted within the Maseru District of Lesotho because this district has clearly defined rural and urban areas, and therefore provides a better representation of Lesotho's demographic diversity. Furthermore, this district has more secondary schools that have enrolled children with disabilities and/or special educational needs, than any other in the country (Eriamiatoe, 2013).

1.5 Limitations

The biggest challenge that faced this study was the assurance that everyone in the focus groups had real opportunities to contribute in the discussions. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) showed that in focus groups, people with more education or skills tend to dominate and to speak more than those with less expertise in these areas. In this study, the participants with more experience in teaching children with disabilities and/or special educational needs, tended to dominate those with little experience in this regard. Informed by Dawson (2006), the researcher addressed this potential problem by gently persuading the shy respondents to contribute more in the discussions.

The findings of this study may not be generalised to other schools or countries. This study may possibly be limited to Lesotho, and particularly to the secondary schools. However, fuzzy generalisation might apply (see chapter 3).

1.6 Significance of the study

It is hoped that this study will be beneficiary in various ways. It aims to augment our understanding of IE – particularly in the context of Lesotho. Stubbs (2002) indicated that there are many different understandings and interpretations of IE, and that these have a major implication for the successful or unsuccessful outcomes and sustainability of IE. Stubbs (2002) further argues that the conceptualisations of IE are constantly developing as reflection on practice deepens, and also as IE happens in practice in different contexts and cultures. According to Stubbs (2002:21): “IE definitions must continue to evolve if IE is to remain a real and valuable response to [address] educational challenges and human rights.”

This study also attempted to address some of concerns that have been raised by Afrocentric scholars such as Stubbs (1996; 2002), Miles (2005) and Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011). These scholars argue that the published literature on the education of children with disabilities in Africa is relatively sparse, and can also be very misleading. Stubbs (2002:17) avows that:

“In general, the literature is weak in terms of the reliability and relevance of hard data, un-acknowledged and un-criticised concepts and cultural bias. Major gaps are discussions relating to participation, indigenous knowledge and skill, sources of influence and evaluation.”

In a nutshell, this study sought to add to our knowledge of the ways in which IE is understood and implemented in Lesotho secondary schools. It summarises literature on IE which is relevant to Lesotho, which might also benefit other countries, especially those that find themselves in similar situation to Lesotho - “fuzzy” generalisation (chapter 3).

1.7 Methodology

Table: 1.7 Methodological summary (for a detailed discussion, see chapter 3)

<i>STUDY PARADIGM</i>	A qualitative study paradigm was used.
<i>RESEARCH DESIGN</i>	A descriptive-explorative case study design was used to gain an in-depth, real-life perspective.
<i>SAMPLING</i>	Convenience and purposeful sampling were used, and included 12 teachers
<i>DATA-COLLECTION METHODS</i>	Explorative: semi-structured and focus-group interviews were used.. Tape recordings and note-taking.
<i>DATA DOCUMENTATION</i>	Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed (including researcher's notes).
<i>DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</i>	The study included a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning, as a data-analysis process using discourse analysis and categorical indexing.

<i>ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</i>	Guidelines for health research were adhered to. These included: (i) informed consent, (ii) voluntary participation, and (iii) protection from harm (which included anonymity and confidentiality).
<i>QUALITY CRITERIA</i>	The four quality criteria used were: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, and authenticity (Creswell, 2007; Golafshani, 2003).

1.8 Elucidation of terms and key concepts

(i) Inclusive education

There is much controversy about the definition and application of the term “inclusive education”, and in some cases the term is used interchangeably with “integrated education”. In 1998, Florian suggested that while there were many definitions of inclusion put forward in multiple contexts, no single definition had been universally accepted. Stubbs (2008) and other authors concur. A single definition is still elusive today – which reflects the complex nature of IE. The concept emanates from several factors that include influences from: indigenous approaches to education; activists and advocates (e.g. activists with disabilities, parents advocating for their children, child rights advocates, and those advocating for women/girls and minority ethnic groups); the quality education and school improvement movement; the special educational needs movement; the NGO movements, networks and campaigns; and the international declarations and agreements about the rights of children with disabilities to education.

There are many Sesotho words for "inclusion" [e.g. *kopanya*, *akaretsa*, *kenyelletsa* (adding together, unite, embrace, welcome)]. The Sesotho meaning for inclusion is very broad and includes non-discrimination and being accepted by everyone with whom one interacts. It includes mutual learning with and from others, and also equal rights (LSMHP, 2001; Phasha and Moichela, 2011).

For this study, IE is understood as a collaborative process that involves all key stakeholders in education and is concerned with removing all barriers to learning,

so ensuring involvement of all learners – including those who are vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation. Children with disabilities are considered in this study to be the most vulnerable to educational exclusion and marginalisation. Figure 1.8 (a) (below) illustrates factors militating against an inclusive system:

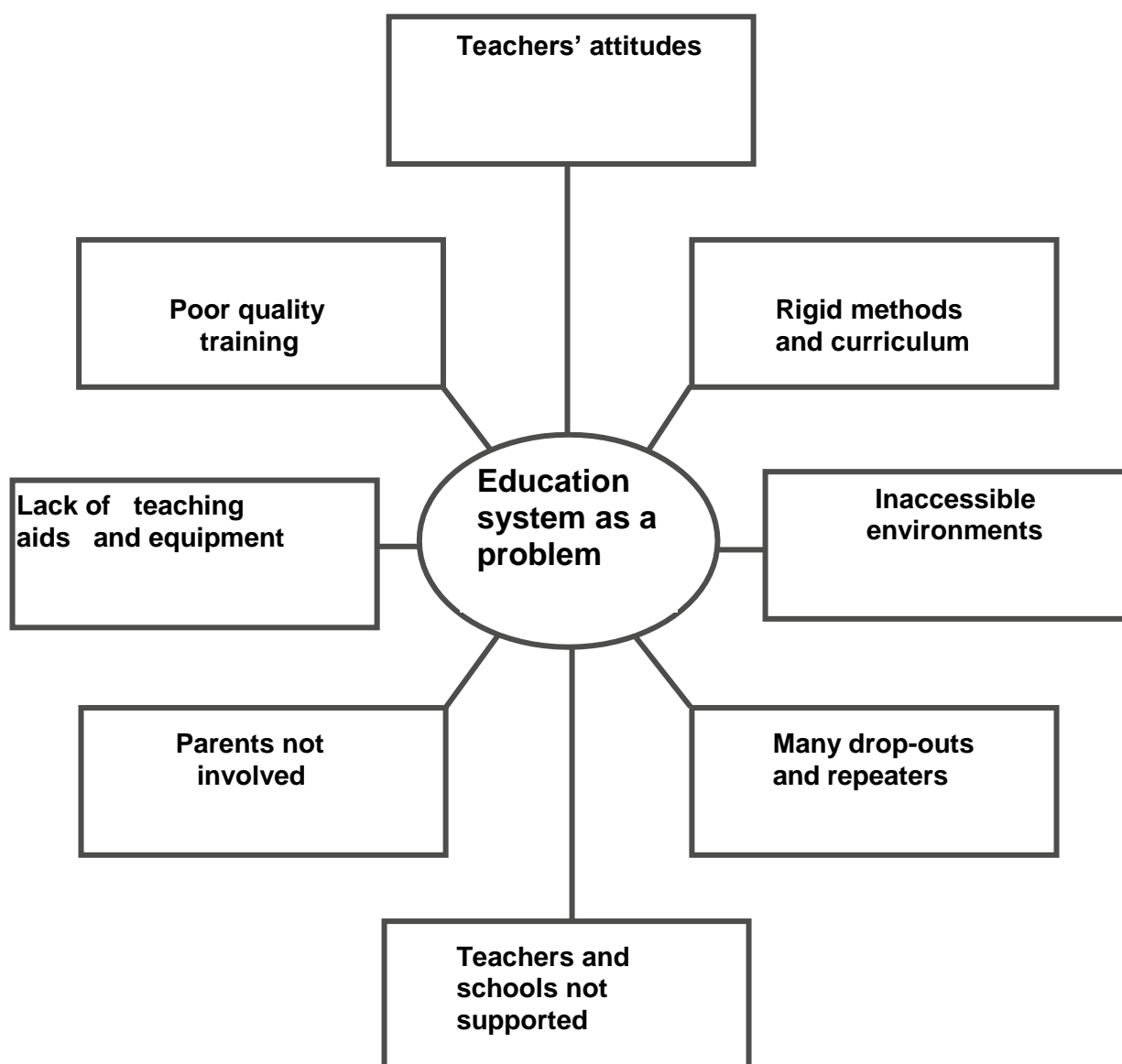


Fig. 1.8(a): Factors militating against an inclusive system

On the other hand, the term “integration” is based solely on the psycho-medical model which views a child with a disability as a problem. Then, such a child is described as “not being able” to fit into existing mainstream classrooms, and therefore an exclusion or separate provision is justified. With this individualistic model, there is an emphasis on professional diagnosis of the child, and on identifying their “problems” – but very little emphasis on changing professional attitudes and the environment (Miles, 2005; Sharma and Deppeler, 2005; Stubbs, 2002). In brief, under integration, the emphasis is on the child fitting the system, while IE advocates that the system should adapt to meet the educational needs of the child.

Perhaps the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘integration’ are perceived as synonymous in Lesotho – as suggested by their use in the Policy Statement on Special Education (1989) and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2005). Although the term ‘integration’ has been used for Lesotho’s (1989) policy, it is argued that the policy actually contains some of the basic ingredients of IE – hence rendering it inclusive (Miles, 2000; 2002). However, the implementation of this policy is understood in this study to reflect pure integration. Eriamiatoe (2013) is more critical of Lesotho’s practical approach to the education of children with disabilities:

“Lesotho’s self-proclaimed practice of inclusive education is based on placing children in the mainstream classroom with inadequate facilities ... This approach reflects an integrated system requiring children with disabilities to fit in rather than an inclusive system designed to meet the needs of all children, including children with disabilities” (Eriamiatoe, 2013:2)

Figure 1.8b (below) illustrates assumptions that govern an integrated system:

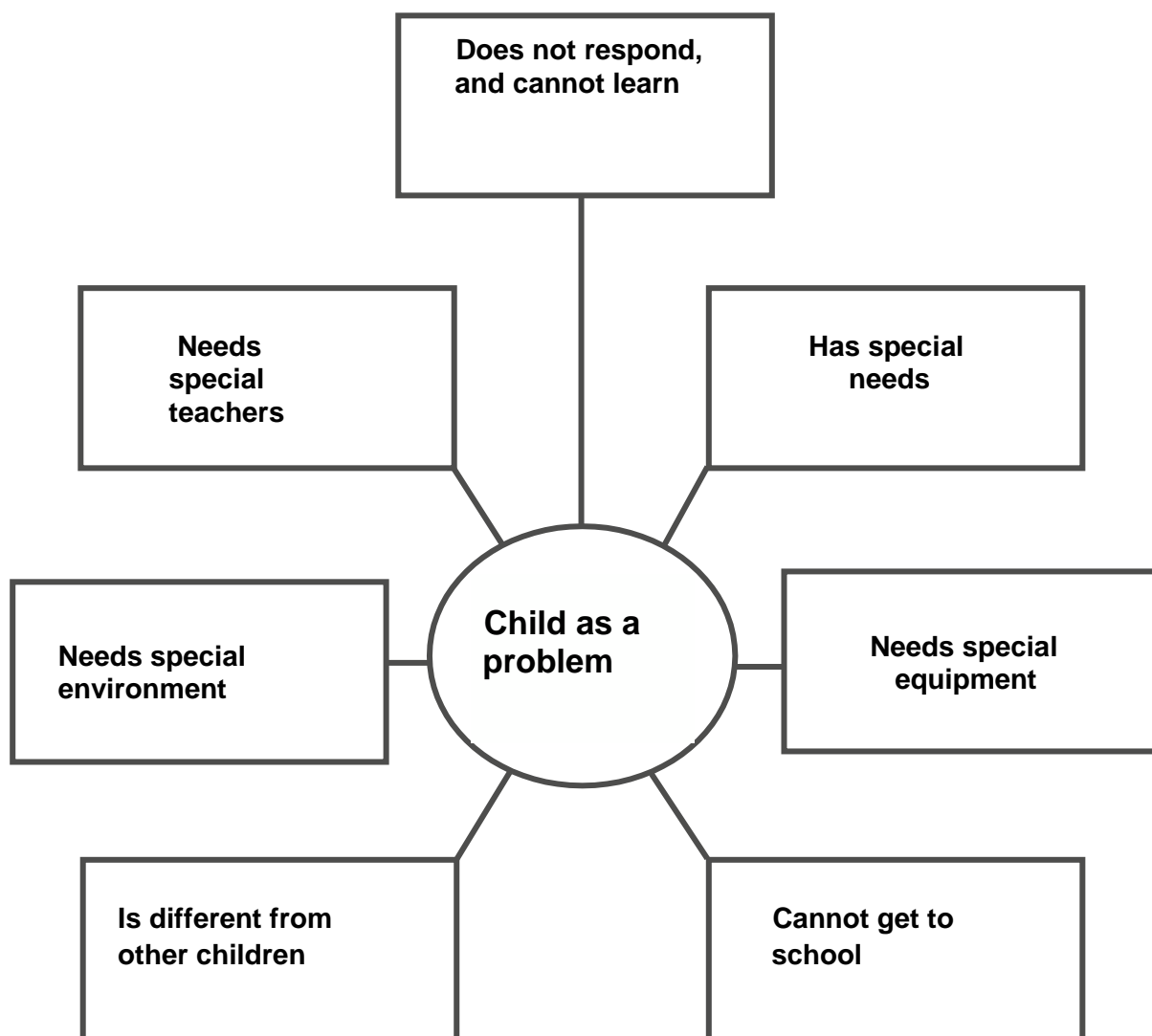


Fig. 1.8b: An integrated system

(Figures 1.7a and 1.7b sourced from Miles, 2002; 2005; DFID, 2010; SCF, 2002; and Stubbs, 2008)

(ii) Children with disabilities and/or special educational needs

There is disagreement about the application of the term “disabled” to children. Often it is not clear what constitutes disability or qualifies a child as having a disability. This term is often used interchangeably with the term “special educational needs”, and yet the two concepts are different in many ways. Children using wheelchairs or callipers may be disabled in terms of attitudes and inaccessible schools – but their educational needs may not be special. Their disability may not be an educational problem, but rather a societal issue (Miles, 2005; Sharma and Deppeler, 2005; Stubbs, 2002; Shannon, 2004; Mukhopadhyay *et al.*, 2009, 2012; Winter and O’Raw, 2010). The concept “special educational needs” focuses mainly on changing the classroom environment and teaching methodology to embrace a wide range of learning abilities. The researcher understands a child to have special educational needs when the child cannot perform “satisfactorily” relative to individual or group “norms” in one of the academic areas such as reading, writing, listening and mathematics – as a result of failure to meet his/her learning style(s) and needs. Such a child is considered to have a “learning disability” by Mbangwana (2011). Clearly, however, this ignores the issue of disabled identity.

On the other hand, disability is understood in this thesis to be a way in which societies negatively respond to or evaluate an individual’s impairment. It is a “restricted” ability (relative to individual or group norms) in terms of individual functioning – in relation to physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, or mental disorders (Mbangwana, 2011; Stubbs, 2002; Miles, 2005). At this juncture, it is certainly worth reiterating that some children with disabilities may not have special educational needs, and vice-versa.

The term “disability” has been applied throughout this thesis to include children with special educational needs.

1.9 Further course of study

Chapter 2 reviews the literature that relates to IE – and focuses on the key aspects and distinguishing characteristics of IE. The main focus will be on the inclusion of

children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Chapter 3 presents the research design and methodology which were adopted, and also the techniques that were used to collect and analyse the data. The collected data are analysed and interpreted in chapter 4. In chapter 5, the researcher makes recommendations based on the discussion in the preceding chapter, and then concludes the study.

1.10 Chapter one summary

This chapter presented the background to the study. It also discussed the problem statement, aim and objectives of the study. It also provided the research questions, research hypotheses, research delimitations, and research limitations. The significance of the research and a brief outline of the adopted methodology were given. Finally, the terms and concepts relating to this study were elucidated

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter objectives

Inclusive education is a very controversial concept, which has been debated over the last four decades. An enormous amount of research on this topic has resulted in researchers coming up with their own ideas on what the concept means and how it can address the educational needs of children with disabilities. Hatchell (2009) refers to it as a very complex and interesting topic in education. Chapter one dealt with the background to the study, the problem statement, the aim and objectives of the study, and also the research questions. Furthermore, it highlighted the hypotheses, delimitations and limitations of the study – as well as its significance. Additionally, chapter one provided definitions of terms that pertained to this study, and discussed the methods that were used to collect and manage the data. Through chapter one, the researcher provided an overview of the study.

For the purpose of guiding the literature review, this chapter begins with discussion of the theoretical framework for the study. Then it provides background information on IE by examining the five theoretical underpinnings of inclusive education (IE), and by exploring some of the main international conventions and policies relevant to the education of children with disabilities. The chapter also discusses the strategies or models that have been used to implement IE, as well as the principles that form its core. There is also a discussion of the key issues that should be considered when putting IE into practice – under the sub-topics policy, leadership, teacher skills and teaching strategies, curriculum and assessment, communication, physical environment of schools, and school external links. Finally, the chapter presents some of the benefits (advantages) of IE, its disadvantages, as well as some challenges facing its implementation.

2.1 Theoretical framework

It was argued in section 1.6 that IE literature is Western dominated because most studies in the field have been carried out in developed countries, and only a few in developing countries. This means there is a gap in the literature in terms of

developing country perspectives on IE. This was one of the motivations for this study, which embarked on exploring secondary school teacher perceptions of IE in Lesotho (one of the developing or under-developed countries in Africa).

The theoretical framework for studying people's perceptions of a phenomenon within their institution, is supported in the social constructivist theory. As per this theory, the mind is active in the construction of knowledge; the mind of human beings is not passive, but actively constructs knowledge and ideas (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In other words, human beings do not construct their interpretations in isolation, but against the environment in which they are actively engaged. Creswell (2003) concurs, claiming that constructivists suppose that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work – developing subjective meaning of their experiences directed at certain objects or things. Constructivists rely on participant views of the situation studied, and then can construct meaning of a situation, which is usually forged in discussions or interactions with others. Hence, the social constructivist approach helped the researcher investigate secondary school teacher perceptions of the inclusion of children with disabilities within their mainstream schools in the Maseru District of Lesotho, through teacher discussions of this concept. This inductive approach to research concurs with Bourdieu's (1985, 1999) three conceptual tools of habitus, field and capital.

Bourdieu (1985, 1999) uses the three thinking tools of habitus, field and capital, to explain the relationship between objective social structures – linking from macro structures to the micro-level. These include institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies, and everyday practices in the social structures (Reed-Danahay, 2005). As Nolan (2012:203) argues, Bourdieu's (1985, 1999) concepts are one important set of tools from his toolbox that represent the "... dynamic relationship between the structure and agency within a social practice pointing to the promise and possibility of social change". The three concepts (habitus, field and capital) are inter-related according to the formula, $(\text{Habitus} \times \text{Capital}) + \text{Field} = \text{Practice}$ (see Jayasinghe and Wickramasinghe, 2008; Suminar, 2013).

Habitus

Habitus is understood as the vibrant intersection of structure and action, society and the individual. It is considered to operate at different levels in an individual's thought and explains how an individual is supposed to behave, think and feel (Nolan, 2012; Suminar, 2013). In line with this thinking, Webb, Shrirato and Danaher (2002) believe that knowledge is always constructed through the habitus – rather than being passively recorded. According to these authors, human beings are inclined towards certain attitudes, values or ways of behaving, because of the influence exerted by their cultural trajectories. They view the habitus as always constituted in moments of practice: “It is always of the moment brought out when a set of dispositions meet a particular problem, choice or context” (Webb *et al.*, 2002:38). Finally, habitus is taken to operate at a level that is at least partly unconscious. Habitus can also express the meaning of things by providing an explanation of the phenomena that exist in the social structure because of one's direct involvement in it (Lizardo, 2004; Suminar, 2013).

In the current study, this implies that teachers' daily interactions with learners with disabilities would describe their habitus, and thus the perceptions they hold and experiences they have while implementing IE in their schools. Teachers can use their habitus to describe their everyday practices of inclusion – the way they chose their teaching strategies, approaches and classroom management to teach children with disabilities in their regular schools. According to Nolan (2011), teachers can use their habitus to classify children with specific disabilities and to adapt their teaching strategies and approaches to meet students' varying learning needs. For example, teachers may classify students with hearing impairment as having learning needs, and, as such, adapt the lessons to engage all the learners. Such approaches taken by a teacher would maximise the benefits to children with disabilities, of being included in a mainstream classroom. The researcher believes that teacher perceptions (views and conceptualisations) and experiences of IE include both conscious and unconscious elements, which is their habitus – and which would emerge from their discussions about IE.

Field

Bourdieu (1985, 1999) explains field as a structured social system occupied by individuals or institutions that have a matrix of power, and which corresponds to further systems of objective relations. Thus, field is a state of the distribution of the specific 'capital' which has been accumulated in the course of previous struggles, and which orientates subsequent strategies (DiGiorgio, 2010; Suminar, 2013). Therefore, field is characterised by things such as schools, institutions and political declarations. The positions held by individuals in the field define their identity and influence on other occupants, agents and institutions. According to Pijl and Frissen (2009), education policy-makers are accountable to the government and general public. They are obliged to maintain and improve the quality of education. Their means to influence practice in schools basically comprises legislation, regulation, and the inspectorate. These means can be useful to fulfil the necessary conditions for IE. For example – clear policy statements, improving special education legislation, re-organising funding, setting up support structures, and empowering parents and NGOs.

The researcher understands that the concept of field explains that IE policy is a product of history: the struggles of people with disabilities to gain recognition and to participate in all aspects of life. Their voices were finally heard by the wider global community, and this stimulated the idea for inclusion in education. Subsequently, countries began perceiving education as a human right, and thereafter each country took on the responsibility of developing an IE policy that would help its children with disabilities to receive education alongside their peers in a regular educational setting (Torombe, 2013). A school may be seen as a smaller field, while the education system is a larger one.

As argued next, teachers require the "capital" in order for them to be part of the school environment (the smaller field).

Capital

The concept of capital is understood as power resources in situations of struggle. Swartz (2008) indicates that there are different types of power resources: material and non-material. Capital is considered to act as a medium of communication

between field and habitus (Grenfell, 2009). Thus, the quantity of capital decides an individual's power and status in a particular field. There are four types of capital (although they are not mutually exclusive): economic, cultural, social and symbolic (DiGiorgio, 2009; Suminar, 2013).

Economic capital refers to wealth such as money or financial resources (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008; Suminar, 2013). Economic capital can influence IE by determining the types of teaching resources and facilities available in a school. DiGiorgio (2009:182) concurs that "... economic capital is important at the school level as ... public schools are required to provide services for students with special needs...." Thus, sufficient resources and facilities to enable IE require sufficient money.

On the other hand, cultural capital represents "... resources that people accumulate and exchange in order to maintain their positions of power within a field" (DiGiorgio, 2009:181). In other words, cultural capital represents non-financial assets that individuals possess and that determine their status within their field. Examples include external markers such as educational qualifications, skills and authority. Hurtado (2010) considers cultural capital to also be linguistic capital, as one's feature(s) or deficits may be attached to a certain name that his/her people hold for such a feature or deficit. For example, in Lesotho, a child born with visual impairment is called a "blind child" ("*sefofu*"), because of the language system in the Basotho culture that determines the name attached to the loss of a sense in the body. Hence, in the inclusive classroom, the child's learning is vital, as it depends on the teacher fully understanding the difference between the child's lack of ability to see and their learning and intellectual abilities.

Symbolic capital refers to prestige, reputation et cetera. Social capital is understood to form a binding social network that includes the form of support an individual requires to be added to the capital he/she already has in order to play a role in the field (DiGiorgio, 2009; Grenfell, 2009; Suminar, 2013). In brief, the concept capital (economic, cultural, symbolic and social) was conceptualised in this study as teacher professional skills and knowledge on inclusion, along with resources, facilities and support, that enable teachers to be inclusive in their schools.

In brief, this study endeavoured to inductively investigate Lesotho secondary school teacher knowledge/conceptualisations and experiences (habitus and capital) of the inclusion of children with disabilities into their regular schools (field). The following sections discuss IE factors that may be influenced by or which may influence teachers' habitus, field and/or capital – thereby impacting on their understanding of this concept. The researcher begins the discussion by providing background to the inclusion initiative.

2.2 Background to inclusive education

Effective education of children with disabilities in mainstream schools (inclusive education) has been a global agenda, and has dominated the international stage from as early as 1989. However, there is still no consensus on what IE means and entails. This issue has sparked international interest from the “human rights” point of view. There are five theoretical underpinnings underlying IE: the psycho-medical model, the sociological response, curricular approaches, school improvement strategies, and critiques of disability studies (Madigan, 2011; Clough and Corbett, 2000). These perspectives are not mutually exclusive, and they become influential through the debate they generate about the IE concept.

The psycho-medical model was prevalent in the 1950s to 1960s. This model considers disabilities as “deficits”, and in turn advocates special (or separate) education for individuals with disabilities. People with disabilities are advocated to seek medical treatment. Consequently, segregated schools are considered essential for “special needs children” (Lauchlan and Boyle, 2007). By the 1960s and early 1970s this model was however reaching the end of its expediency (Madigan, 2011).

Vlachou (2004) and Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2004) recommend that learning difficulties should be viewed in terms of a wide spectrum of needs, and not solely the medical point of view. They state that the impact of environmental factors in schools should be taken into consideration, and thus advocate the identification and removal of environmental factors that can affect an individual's ability to function in schools. The social model of disability dominated the international stage in the late 1970s

(Lindsay, 2003). The main objective of this model is social construction – rather than an individual's deficits. It views special needs as the outcome of social construction processes. Later on, there was an emerging critique which pointed out that the above-mentioned model puts too much emphasis on the analysis of individuals with disabilities, schools and society, and provides no advice for classroom teachers. Consequently, curricular approaches emerged (Lindsay, 2007; Khan, 2011).

The development of curriculum and teaching approaches helped foster a more inclusive school and college culture. This approach influenced the development of a special curriculum – which is a set of teaching plans that were maintained for many years and which powerfully reinforced the separateness of mainstream and special schools in the United Kingdom (UK). The approach emphasises that special education teachers need knowledge and proficiency relating to behavioural objectives, goal setting, task analysis and programme writing, in their training programme for the 21st century (Mittler, 2004). There are two important contributions from this approach. First, a direct connection between disability assessment and the educational curriculum was made. Second, there was recognition that educational difficulties are not exclusive to learners, but are also linked to instructional conditions (Terzi, 2007). The researcher perceives this to imply that any child (with or without disability) might experience difficulties in learning if instructional conditions are not favourable. Clearly, the curriculum and teaching approaches advocate curricular and instructional adaptations which are considered to be core to IE.

The perspectives discussed above have greatly influenced people's understanding, views and practices relating to IE in developed and developing countries worldwide. Table 1 (below) summarises the main international conventions on the rights of children with disabilities, to quality education.

Education as a right for all children has been highlighted in international documents since the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The issue of education arises in Articles 26 and 27 of the UDHR. Article 26 affirms everyone's right to education and states that education shall be free and compulsory at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Article 27 stipulates that everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to

share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Subsequent documents point out that certain groups, including children with disabilities, are especially vulnerable to exclusion. In response to this call – the orthodox segregated education was established in different countries.

The United States of America (USA) paved the way for IE through the concept of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in the 1970s. This movement aimed to merge general education and special education, owing to growing concerns about cost containment of education and the labelling of students (Dettmer, Thurston and Dyck, 2005). The LRE requires schools to educate students with varying disabilities as much as possible with their non-disabled peers. This is determined on an individual basis, and on each student's educational needs – rather than the student's disability. This concept promotes the placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. However, this seems to run contrary to the full inclusion call (section 2.3), as it stipulates that students can be shifted to self-contained special education classes, specialised schools, and a residential programme – but only when their school performance indicates that even with supplementary aids and services, they cannot be educated satisfactorily in a general education classroom (Salend, 2001; Winter and O'Raw, 2010). Moreover, the LRE concept encourages students with disabilities to attend the school closest to their homes and it promotes interaction with the students' neighbourhood. It also encourages the participation of students with disabilities in all school activities – including extracurricular activities. As per the concept, a classroom should reflect the ratio of the larger population, including students with and without disabilities: a principle called "Natural Proportion" by Salend (2001). Another important document relating to the development of IE and that originated from the USA, is the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This was subsequently amended to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, and updated again in 1997 to promote whole-school approaches to inclusion (Evans and Lunt, 2002).

Articles 28 and 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), state that all children have the right to education – irrespective of impairment and disability – and require that this should be provided on the basis of equality of opportunities. Article 2 is the most important for making IE a reality, as it focuses on

non-discrimination. It states that every Article applies equally and without exception to all children – irrespective of race, colour, sex, disability, birth, or other status. On the other hand, Article 23 was specifically intended to address the educational rights of children with disabilities. Nonetheless, it appears to be ambiguous, as it suggests that children with disabilities need special care, and this could be interpreted to mean a form of segregated education (Miles, 2005).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title of Document</u>	<u>Key Statements</u>
1989	UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	Article 28 (Right to education) states that every child has the right to a primary education, which is free. It calls for wealthier countries to help poorer countries achieve this goal. Article 29 talks about the goals of education, which are to develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest.
1990	World Declaration on Education For All (Jomtien)	Article 3 reinforces Article 28 of the UNCRC, but also calls for equal opportunities for learning.
1993	UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities	Rule 6 calls for member states to recognise the principle of equity in primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for all – including people with disabilities in integrated settings.
1994	Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education	Stipulates that schools should accommodate all learners, irrespective of an individual's physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.
2000	World Education Forum for Action, Dakar (restated the urgency to reach marginalised groups)	Re-stated the Salamanca Statement, and thus all children have the right to quality education that will meet their basic learning needs. This means they must learn to know, do, live together, and to be.
	Millennium Development Goals (by 2015)	Goal 2 focuses on the achievement of universal primary education. Thus, member states must ensure that all children complete a full course of primary schooling.
2001	EFA Flagship on Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities	The emphasis is on people with disabilities as mostly being marginalised in education. Therefore it is urged that the universal right to education must extend to individuals with disabilities, and all nations must act on their obligation to establish or reform public education systems that are accessible to, and that meet, the needs of individuals with disabilities.
2007	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Article 24 shows that the member states should ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning that will enable people with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

Table 2.2: Key international initiatives supporting inclusive education for children with disabilities (adapted from DFID, 2010; SCF, 2002).

Education for all (EFA) was launched at the World Conference in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. It emphasises the inherent right of every child to primary education and the commitment to a child-centred pedagogy – where individual differences are seen as a challenge and not as a problem. The conference noted that educational opportunities were limited, basic education was limited to literacy and numeracy, and that certain marginalised groups were excluded from education altogether. Consequently, EFA emphasises need for improvement in the quality of primary education and teacher education, and recognises and respects the wide diversity of needs and patterns of development among primary school children. The Jomtien (1990) Declaration also highlights the need to universalise education and to promote equity by ensuring that girls, women and other under-served groups gain access to education. Clearly, the EFA movement is one of the most significant international initiatives for providing quality education to all citizens. Progress towards achievement of its goals, however, has been very slow. This results from a lack of clarity of those goals in civil society, as argued in the next paragraph.

EFA is criticised as a top-down movement which was planned, conducted and evaluated by international and national political and technocratic elites – with scant information or encouragement to participate given to citizens, or even to teachers and education researchers and specialists: “The EFA plans at national level have been government plans, drawn up and discussed behind closed doors by national and international functionaries” (Stubbs, 2002:62). Furthermore, it seems that the global, regional and national meetings for monitoring the EFA were attended by a few familiar faces, while only a few people knew about the work done by the EFA Forum (the international body monitoring the EFA, whose Secretariat was located in the Paris offices of UNESCO), or about the composition of its Steering Committee, its meetings, and its decisions (Stubbs, 2002). The researcher believes that this approach to document development may render important documents unimplementable for grassroots stakeholders. Stubbs (2002) refers to such documents as the “cover-all documents” that neither represent nor satisfy anyone in particular.

The 1993 United Nations (UN) Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons With Disabilities further emphasises the right of people with disabilities to

quality education. Rule six stipulates that member states should recognise the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for people with disabilities – in integrated settings. It calls for member states to ensure that the education of people with disabilities is an integral part of their educational systems.

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) reinforces the right of all children to education, and calls for member countries to develop education systems that take human diversity into consideration. It calls for member states to promote EFA – which it considers to be the most effective way to achieve a cohesive society. Furthermore, it asserts that EFA can improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the education system, while providing an effective education for most children (Choudhuri, Khandake, Alam, Hasan and Rashida, 2005; Miles, 2005; McConkey and Bradly, 2007; SCF, 2002).

In 2000 the World Education Forum was held in Dakar (Senegal), to review progress and to set new international targets for achieving EFA. The Forum committed itself to:

“... take account of the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs” (Miles, 2005:10).

The new international targets outlined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (2000) include access to and completion of Universal Primary Education by 2015 (Goal 2), and the promotion of gender equity and the empowerment of women (Goal 3) by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015. However, it will be impossible for countries to achieve the MDG on education if marginalised groups of learners, such as those with disabilities, continue to be excluded from primary education. It has also been noted that national plans to achieve universal primary education tend to be implemented independently of IE initiatives. It is argued that any educational plans

which do not consider an inclusive approach, may only make the EFA objective unfeasible:

“The question is often asked; ... will the adoption of a strategy to build more inclusive education systems and institutions help or hinder the achievement of the very urgent and important objective of EFA? The answer is emphatic. Without the development of inclusive policies in education ... EFA will not be achieved” (UNESCO, 2001).

The Dakar Forum, just like with any other meeting concerned essentially with discussing and improving documents that have been prepared in advance, was criticised as a huge and costly meeting lacking sparkle or expectation, with complicated logistics, and with only a few surprises:

“What is left open for discussion is form rather than content: replacing, deleting or adding words, moving paragraphs, or highlighting one particular idea among the whole. Frequently, battles and victories revolve around "including" sentences or paragraphs that every person or group considers relevant from their own points of view or fields of interest....” (Stubbs, 2002:62).

In an effort to achieve EFA, a Flagship on education for all (Towards Inclusion) was established to act as a catalyst to ensure that the right to education and the goals of the Dakar Framework were realised for individuals with disabilities. This Flagship was formed by an alliance of diverse organisations – including global disability organisations, international development agencies, inter-governmental agencies, and experts in the fields of special and inclusive education from developed and developing countries. It sought to unite all EFA partners in their efforts to provide access to and promote completion of quality education for every person with disabilities (UNESCO, 2007; Miles, 2005). Its main objectives were to:

- Combat discrimination and remove structural barriers to learning and participation in education.
- Promote a broad concept of education – including essential life skills and life-long learning.
- Contribute to a focus on the needs of people with disabilities when resources and activities address the realisation of EFA goals.

The right of people with disabilities to education was further expressed in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). In particular, Article 24 stresses (among others) member states' commitment to ensure a non-discriminative education accompanied by equal opportunities, and also an IE system which should extend beyond secondary school level (UNESCO, 2006; Choudhuri *et al.*, 2005).

By virtue of being a signatory to UNESCO, Lesotho is bound to achieve EFA goals targeted for 2015. The history of policy-driven, inclusive (special) education in Lesotho, probably began with a proclamation from a civil society organisation. According to Johnstone and Chapmen (2009), in 1987, King Moshoeshoe II's charitable social organisation *Hlokomela Bana* (Care for Children) called for a national discussion about how to educate its children with disabilities. In response, the Ministry of Education hired an outside consultant to evaluate special education options in Lesotho. Csapo (1987), the author of the study, recommended that Lesotho should move towards IE, because it is cost-effective and fitted well into Lesotho's cultural framework of extended family and caretaking of all children. Lesotho probably had no real infrastructure for additional special schools at the time. Two years later, a policy was put in place based on these recommendations. As per Csapo (1987), IE in Lesotho meant a practice in which students with disabilities were taught in regular schools, together with their peers.

Lesotho's 1989 policy preceded United Nations' declarations such as EFA (UNESCO, 1990) and the Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1996). Once Lesotho's policy was in place, a feasibility study was conducted with the help of an external consultant. The authors of the study concluded that IE was feasible. The Ministry of Education followed with a policy and plan of action. The original plan for IE training (based on recommendations from the feasibility study) called for a Special Education Unit to train all teachers in 10 pilot primary schools about inclusive (special) education practices, but during school breaks. The selection of 10 pilot schools was considered to be cost-effective for creating a group of schools that could act as demonstration schools and work with neighbouring schools on IE implementation (Mariga and Phachaka, 1993).

Mariga and Phachaka (1993) and Mittler and Platt (1996) noted that pedagogical practices were more amenable to IE in the primary curriculum at the time of this reform, and this made primary schools the main target for training. Lesotho's Special Education Unit planned to add secondary and post-secondary schools to the plan in future activities. Training of teachers in schools continued into the 1990s, when external evaluators (Mittler and Platt, 1996) recommended that the training programme continue – by adding 10 new schools as “registered” special education schools per year (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009).

In 1996, the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) also employed two foreign-aid workers to introduce IE into the existing “professional studies” pedagogical curriculum. At this time, the LCE also became autonomous from the Ministry of Education and its units. Thereafter, the connection between the LCE and IE was based on prior agreements between LCE and the Ministry of Education. The leadership of LCE was then, and continues to be, committed to IE efforts, but has lacked the human resources required to promote its programme. One reason for this lack is that foreign aid workers were supposed to be replaced in 1999 by a Lesotho national faculty member who studied in the United Kingdom from 1996 to 1998 – but the arrangement was in fact never fulfilled.

From the period 1998 to 2004, IE remained a component in LCE, but no formally trained lecturers taught the subject matter. In 2004, a lecturer with extensive training in special education began teaching at LCE, and revived the IE component (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009). In the year 2015 there were five special education lecturers at LCE. The college offers a module in special education (with an IE component) to all student teachers in their first year of study. Those who are interested can proceed to do an Advanced Diploma in Special Education. This is a one-year programme focusing on the areas of hearing impairment, visual impairment and learning disability. Those who are specialising in hearing impairment and visual impairment also have to do a module in learning disability.

At the National University of Lesotho (NUL), the special education component was introduced in the Department of Education in 2009. This four-year programme is offered as a second major subject for secondary-school teacher trainees. In 2015,

there were five lecturers in the programme (two full-time and three part-time) – teaching fifteen courses (modules) under special education. This implies considerable understaffing (as stated by a full-time lecturer at NUL). It seems however that only a few student teachers volunteer to take special education professional training, because Lesotho's Ministry of Education has not yet structured employment conditions for this speciality. Roughly three months of teaching practice are attended in the final fourth year, and in many cases the teaching practice is related more to other majors and not to special education, a full-time lecturer at NUL argued.

It may be that teacher education programmes in many universities are criticised for being too theoretical, so denying teacher trainees the practical skills. This is despite much research in countries such as South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2006), Namibia (Haihambo, 2010) and Botswana (Kuyini and Mangope, 2011), that shows a general lack of effective preparation for special education teacher trainees by tertiary institutions – thereby rendering graduates unproductive and unable to cater for the diverse educational needs of the learners. This culminates in a negative perception of IE, so causing additional stress (Dart, 2007; Engelbrecht, 2006; Molope, 2007; Naicker, 2008; Haihambo, 2008; Mbenwa, 2010; Kuyini and Mangope, 2011).

2.3 The controversy about IE

It was argued in chapter 1 (section 1.7) that IE is remarkably controversial. The debate surrounding this concept, in part, emanates from the argument about “disability” itself. As Hatchell (2009) and Slee and Allan (2001) have noted, there are many different ways of defining who is disabled. Also pointing to the confusion surrounding understanding and the application of the term “disability”, Thomas (2004) stresses that there is no clear consensus on what is special about children with disabilities, and even less, as to the best way of meeting their needs.

Although only a few people question the appropriateness of IE for children with disabilities, there is considerable debate about the types of disabilities that should be (or should not be) accommodated in general education classes, as per the

researcher's observation. On the one side, advocates of IE (e.g. Shannon, 2004; Mukhopadhyay *et al.*, 2009; 2012; Winter and O'Raw, 2010) believe that:

- All students have a basic human right to attend school with other students who are their peers, and this can only occur in a single school system where all students are members of one learning community.
- With appropriate support, all students benefit from education in inclusive settings.
- When students with disabilities leave the general education classroom to go to a special education setting, they are stigmatised by their classmates/peers.
- The teaching approaches used in separate special education classes are often not significantly different from those used in regular education classrooms.

On the other side, there are those who believe that only children with disabilities who meet certain standards, or who maintain a certain rate of academic progress, should be accommodated in regular education classrooms. Their argument is that:

- To say that all students should be in a general education setting is to deny the unique characteristics of students with disabilities, and this denies such students the right to an individualised education.
- Some students do need the specialised, structured environment and also the highly individualised services that a special education class can provide.
- The general education classroom is not always the least restrictive environment; some of the services that students with disabilities need cannot be provided in the general education classroom, without calling attention to student differences and disrupting the entire class.
- General education classrooms and teachers who work there are not necessarily equipped to manage the learning needs of some students with disabilities.
- Students in inclusive situations and their classroom teachers should receive sufficient support services, and this is often not the case (Cigman, 2007; Hatchell, 2009; Winter and O'Raw, 2010).

The advocates of this side of inclusion have a conditional support for IE, thereby calling for partial inclusion (section 2.4). IE is also regarded by Hornby (2010) as a vague concept, in terms of its definition, and Hornsby cautions that this may lead to confusion. According to Hornby, there is also confusion in the curriculum and about the goals of inclusion, as well as about what can be realistically achieved. Clearly, the controversy around IE emanates from people's habitus (their knowledge and understanding of disability), which, on the other hand is also influenced by their capital (their education about IE as well as their culture) and their field (their education system).

Probably, the confusion surrounding IE has led to some criticism against it. IE is considered by some scholars to be a Western concept, which is intended to dilute or overpower Southern cultures (Alfredo and Dyson, 2005). These opponents of the inclusion movement refer to inclusive schooling as contemporary cultural imperialism of Western ideologies. Terzi (2010) argues that inclusion is an imprecise "one size fits all" approach, and that it is a "troubled concept" because different people define it differently and there is no consensus on what the term encompasses. Brown (2010) concurs, that when the term is used in different cultures it may be applied in different and sometimes contradictory ways. There is also debate on how to describe students' identity in an inclusive class and how a school culture should be shaped to fit with it (Slee, 2008).

Some experts believe that an inclusive classroom is not the best option for some children with disabilities. Fore, Hagan-Burke, Boon and Smith (2008) argue that IE has few positive outcomes for children with special educational needs, and who need specialised services that can only be provided outside regular classrooms. In his critical examination of IE, Hegarty (2001) reports three main points in relation to IE. First, he argues that the notion of inclusion must signify something other than excellence in education or good schools – which some definitions seem to highlight. Second, he concurs that for some students with special educational needs, being included in a regular school environment is neither possible nor desirable (for example, students with a visual impairment will need mobility training outside a regular classroom). Finally, he claims that while the aim of inclusion is important, an

over-emphasis on inclusion runs the risk of distorting the hierarchy of values in education – which he believes are the core objectives of developing young people's potential and equipping them for adulthood life.

Despite this criticism, IE still seems to be the pre-eminent choice for addressing the challenges of socio-economic inequity and educational marginalisation. Thus, it strives for social justice and economic independence for those who are often marginalised as a result of disability. Perhaps criticism is deemed an important aspect for validating an idea or concept (Glanzer, Ream, Villarreal and Davis, 2004; Ralejoe, 2011). The researcher considers that some of the criticism results from, among other factors, people's attitudes towards IE which has a bearing on their habitus [for example, critics from Alfredo and Dyson (2005)], while others result from capital barriers such as inadequate resources [for example, critics from Fore, Hagan-Burke, Boon and Smith (2008)].

2.4 Inclusion models

The argument from some experts is that the teaching of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms does not differ from regular teaching in mainstream classrooms. Crawford, Roberts and Hickman (2009) spell out the duties of a teacher as knowing students' strengths, weaknesses and needs related to learning, creativity and socialisation with peers. In other words, by virtue of spending much time with learners, teachers are expected to have more knowledge of learners, classrooms, and the school environment, and to use this knowledge to point out weaknesses, shortcomings and conditions in the system – which should be changed, in order to accommodate different kinds of learners. Thus, students' knowledge, attitudes, concerns and needs should be the starting point of the teaching process. For the researcher, this implies that proper teaching in mainstream schools is naturally inclusive.

Several models/systems for implementing IE have been proposed. Even so, it can be argued there is no clear consensus in the field of special education about the models of inclusion to be practised in educational situations. Thus, the applicability of each model is a function of an individual's understanding of inclusion (habitus), the

type of education system (field), and the resources available (capital) to implement it. The models deemed relevant to the current study are discussed below:

Partial Inclusion Model

Some scholars make a distinction between “partial inclusion” and “full inclusion”. Partial inclusion (or simply “inclusion”) is understood to imply a commitment to educate all children to the maximum extent appropriate, and in the school and classroom attended by typical peers. Students with disabilities are taught by a regular education teacher and they participate in class activities and lessons that may be adapted for their individual needs. This approach stresses that the child benefits from being in the class – rather than having to keep up with other students. Students with disabilities may also spend part of their day in a special education classroom to meet their academic, social, and behavioural needs (“in and out approach/model,” as maintained by Heinman [2004]). In a study conducted in the UK and Israel, Heinman (2004) found that this model would be more effective for students with learning disabilities. Teachers in this study believed that this approach would enable students with disabilities to get the special instruction they needed, together with regular lessons and interactions with peers in regular settings.

The Ecological or Social Model (Full Inclusion Model)

This model focuses on the learner and the different systems or ecologies that are part of his/her environment – emphasising the interrelatedness of all the parts into a whole. For example, a school has *inter alia* staff, learners and teachers, serving as sub-systems that are all working together towards one goal: the education of a learner (Jekinson, 2001). Support is then taken to the child in the mainstream school, rather than removing the child to a special school. It locates the problem of exclusion firmly within the system, and not in the person or their characteristics (Stubbs, 2008). A child with disabilities and/or special educational needs will thus be able to access education in the neighbourhood school. This model offers teachers opportunities to deal with learning problems by paying special attention to the environmental or situational factors that may be contributing to the problem, and this enhances the success of dealing with problems in an appropriate manner. This model adopts Le Roux’s (2004) view of a learner as being an indivisible psycho-biological organism, whose cognitive development and learning are the outcomes of his/her constructive

interaction with all natural, cultural and social contexts – by which his/her existence is defined.

Full inclusion is understood by the researcher to fulfil Bourdieu's (1985, 1999) formula (Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice. This is in the sense that a child with disabilities is kept full-time in the mainstream school with other children (a "natural" field), so that he/she can receive academic and social development (capital - from both teachers and peers) for developing his/her knowledge, skills and personhood (habitus), which will then reflect in the child's decision-making, behaviour, and other personal activities (practice).

Rights-based approaches

These approaches aim to merge the relevant human rights relating to education and to highlight key underpinning principles such as participation, accountability and transparency, non-discrimination, and links to human rights standards (Lewis, 2008). The approaches call for the governments to develop legally binding frameworks (the field, in terms of policy and practice) for the provision of IE. They draw strength from the United Nations' (UN) EFA agenda:

- The right of access to education;
- The right to quality education; and
- The right to respect within the learning environment.

Four teaching approaches to implement IE can be drawn from Heinman (2004). These are: the twin-track approach; two-teachers approach; the peer-tutoring approach; and rejection of inclusion.

2.5 Inclusive education teaching approaches

Twin-Track Approach

Merely changing the education system cannot bring about inclusion. It is deemed necessary to also ensure that children with disabilities have the necessary support and resources in their families, communities and learning environment (Lewis, 2008).

This view resulted in a Twin Track Approach which focuses on the learner who is vulnerable to exclusion, and which advocates for their support (field - for example, involving other sectors such as health and social welfare) and provision of resources (capital - for example, assistive devices) to aid their learning.

The Two-Teachers or Team-Teaching Approach

According to this model, two teachers teach simultaneously in the classroom, with one of them (with training in special education) focusing on the students with disabilities and/or special educational needs. In this model, teachers practise team teaching in order to help all students (Heinman, 2004). The team meets regularly, and establishes consistent communication among team members. This model is designed so that teachers are not working independently to achieve the success of their students, but rather all team members – regular education and special education – work together and share their individual expertise. According to Farrell (2000), this model can be organised in five different ways:

(1) *One teacher, One Support* – This model works well for teaching a unit where one teacher is more of an expert than the other. Students still have two teachers to ask questions and to get helped.

(2) *Parallel Teaching Design* – Here the teacher divides the class into groups and teaches them simultaneously. The student to teacher ratio is low, more time is devoted to learning than students waiting for help, opportunities for re-teaching are immediate, support for the teacher is present, communication is constant, and behavioural challenges can be minimised.

(3) *Station Teaching* – This approach has the teacher dividing up content and the students so that the teachers or students rotate at the end of a unit. It is ideal for subject-matter taught in units, with no particular sequence. Benefits include the opportunity for re-teaching, the student to teacher ratio is low, teachers become experts with material, and communication among teachers is constant. Nonetheless, the researcher believes there may be a potential threat of monotony when using this approach. Therefore, it is considered helpful for teachers to take care when planning and distributing the units to learners, in order to evade a detrimental monotony.

(4) *Alternative Teaching Design* – In this model, one teacher leads an enrichment or alternative activity, while a second teacher re-teaches a small group of students if they happen to struggle with content. This design is more suitable for mathematics and physical science, because re-teaching opportunities are immediate.

(5) *Team Teaching* – This model has teachers working together to deliver the same material to the entire class. Teachers circulate around the class providing immediate re-teaching, and this also provides a low student to teacher ratio.

Peer- Tutoring Approach

Children with disabilities (including those with severe disabilities) are taught in a regular classroom-setting in groups, together with those without disabilities. The ratio of children with disabilities to those without disabilities is the same in the class as in the community. The ratio of children to people assisting them should, however, always be as low as possible, in order to allow for more personal interactional learning. This model could be modified to reach children with disabilities who (due to various reasons) cannot attend school at all. In such a case, it would assume what could be termed “a home based approach”, in which children with disabilities will be taught effectively in an inclusive manner at home or within the local community (Farrell, 2000). The strength of this approach was witnessed, among others, by one Mosotho girl:

“I was taught how to read and write at home by my best friend – we used to play together all the time. We played with dolls and I taught my friends how to sew clothes and knit jerseys. We started a choir and [we] were joined by many children. Teachers from Tanka primary school visited us and gave me some work to do” (Fosere, 2001:1).

Rejection of Inclusion

Teachers in this group believe it would be better for students with disabilities to study in separate classes where they would progress at their own pace. Teachers in this position fear that students with special educational needs would never be able to reach the academic level of the non-disabled (“normal”) students – unless they learn separately. In addition to these preferences, teachers may choose to apply a hybrid

model such as two-teachers and in-and-out approaches, depending on prevailing conditions in the process of teaching students with disabilities and/or special educational needs (Heinman, 2004).

The principles of IE are examined in the next section.

2.6 Principles of inclusive education

In many cases, what goes on in an inclusive class is more than what can be captured in a definition of IE. Put in Siebalak's (2002:8) words, "[a] mere definition [of IE] will not suffice in conveying the actual meaning of the concept for everyday teaching and learning." IE can be a starting point for addressing the rights of children in a range of cultures and contexts. It could work as a catalyst for change, because it not only enhances education within schools, but also represents an increased awareness of human rights and leads to a reduction in discrimination between poor and rich (Winter and O'Raw, 2010; McConkey and Bradley, 2007; Miles, 2005; Stubbs, 2002; DFID, 2010). There are some principles which form the core of IE, and these principles should be adhered to when planning and resourcing education systems. Furthermore, they determine how schools and classrooms are managed, and how teachers and children interact. These principles are considered by the researcher to be key to the current research, because they can shape teacher understanding of IE (their habitus) – which inevitably influences their teaching choices and approaches.

Central to IE is the principle that students with disabilities belong in mainstream education. The essential principle of an inclusive school, is that all children should be taught together – regardless of their differences. An inclusive school should accommodate the needs of all students and welcome diversity as a way to enrich learning for everyone. The argument is that all children, with and without disabilities, can learn effectively together in an ordinary mainstream school, with appropriate networks of support. Exclusion of a student because of a particular disabling condition is reckoned to diminish not only the student, but also the enriched learning that can take place within the school community. This means that all students should be enabled to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream settings – whatever

their needs. There are many different ways of achieving this, and inclusion may take different forms for individual students (Winter and O’Raw, 2010; Miles, 2002; Mukhopadhyay *et al.*, 2009, 2012; Magweva, 2007; Nsamenang and Tchombe, 2011). Furthermore, as per Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, Farrell, Frankham, Gallannaugh, Howes and Smith (2006:2): “an exploration of inclusion requires us to make explicit the particular values [and] their meanings and implications that we wish to see enacted through education”.

The principles that underpin IE are summarised by Save the Children – United Kingdom [SCF] (2006:2), as follows:

- All children have equal rights to quality education – and therefore education must be accessible to all.
- All children must benefit from education.
- Educational exclusion, based on any human status, must be avoided at all costs.
- IE promotes changes throughout the education system and within communities, so ensuring that the education system adapts to the child and not vice-versa.
- Children’s views must be considered because they are active participants in their own learning.
- Individual differences between children are a source of educational enrichment, and not a problem.
- The diversity of needs and patterns of development of children should be addressed through a wide and flexible range of responses.
- Inclusive, regular schools are the most effective means of combating discrimination, building inclusive societies, and also achieving education for all.
- Simply placing excluded children within a mainstream setting does not in itself assure inclusion; rather, school reforms are essential for meeting individual learner needs.
- All aspects of education – including the curriculum, teaching methods, school culture and environments – present opportunities for promoting IE.

Furthermore, Hornby (2012), UNESCO (2005) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) (2013), list four key elements that support an inclusive practice:

(1) Inclusion as a process

Inclusive education is a continuous process of improving the education system. It has to be seen as a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity. It is about changing classroom practice and empowering schools and teachers to be more responsive and flexible to meet the needs of all children. It involves learning how to live with differences and how to learn from the differences. Differences are seen more positively as a stimulus for fostering learning among children and adults.

(2) IE is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers

IE is concerned with collecting and evaluating information from different sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. It requires identifying and addressing discriminatory attitudes and practices, in order to reduce barriers to learning and participation. In other words, it is about using evidence from various sources in order to stimulate creativity and problem-solving.

(3) IE is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students

Presence means children going to school and how reliable and punctually they attend, participation relates to the quality of their experiences in school, while achievement is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum – not just tests and examination results. The argument is that not all students need to learn in the same way and not all students need to achieve the same things, but all students need to be supported to achieve according to their fullest potential.

(4) IE is mostly concerned with learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or under-achievement

This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that those at risk are carefully monitored, and that steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in the education system. The inclusion of all children in the same schools and classrooms will enhance social inclusion and acceptance of diversity. In

this regard, social inclusion may sometimes be more important than the actual learning achievement (Hornby, 2012; UNESCO, 2005; UNRWA, 2013).

Taken into consideration when planning for and implementing IE, the above principles and elements of inclusion may help make IE a reality. Therefore, the extent to which teachers understand these principles becomes essential – and which motivated the current study.

The next section discusses some factors that may facilitate implementation of IE.

2.7 Putting inclusion into practice

There is no fixed way of offering IE. Succinctly put, “[t]here is no ... ‘template’ for what an inclusive school or education approach should look like” (SCF, 2006:3). Concurring with the notion of flexibility when offering IE, Winter and O’Raw (2010) claim that the principle of an IE system in which tolerance, diversity and equity is striven for, may be uncontested; nonetheless, the way in which we achieve this, is much more complex and challenging. It is proposed that an action to promote and support inclusion should itself be inclusive, and needs to take place at several levels – with government, local authorities, individual schools, families and communities, and also with the children themselves. The emphasis placed on each of these levels will depend on the local political, social, economic and cultural contexts (SCF, 2006). The researcher has recognised that although IE approaches may differ, depending on the context, there is substantial agreement in the international literature regarding key practices (ingredients) that support inclusion.

This section briefly discusses some of the descriptors of IE in practice (particularly those that pertain to the current study), under the following sub-topics: policy, leadership, teacher skills and teaching strategies, curriculum and assessment, communication, physical environment of schools, and school external links.

2.7.1 Policy

The term policy refers to a country's developmental course of action proposed by the government and submitted as a legislative document stating what has to be done, and by whom – regarding a major change in social behaviour (Gale, 2006). In the context of this study policy constitutes field. Creation of policies for separate categories of children is considered to be time-consuming, expensive and divisive (SCF, 2002). Consequently, the Daker Framework for Action on EFA (2000) calls for international governments to develop inclusion-orientated education policies – “[t]he key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of EFA as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies” (UNESCO, 2000:viii). Legislation at national level may provide the framework and resources. However, the way in which legislation is enacted is usually a “top-down” process. Winter and O’Raw (2010) state that school-reform efforts led from the top and which are passed down to teachers in the classrooms often fail, because those who have to implement them have not been sufficiently involved in the decision-making process, and those who create the policies are often unaware of the contexts in which teachers work on a daily basis. Thus, it is suggested that this top-down approach should be accompanied by bottom-up support, and also a partnership approach, in order to ensure successful implementation. In support of this idea, Nghipondoka (2001:27) contests that “... [i]t is ... very important to give teachers a sense of ownership; they need to own the change through direct involvement, where their views and concerns are taken into consideration.”

In addition to state legislation, individual schools in each country are required to have their own policies on IE. To be relevant and effective, those policies must be developed in consultation with all key stakeholders – including parents and family members, the children themselves (with and without disabilities), local education officers, local community leaders and community members, NGOs, professionals in education (including administrators and those who control finances), school principals, teachers and school staff (caretakers, cleaners, cooks, secretaries). The policy statements should be unambiguous and transparent and should be regularly evaluated by all stakeholders (Winter and O’Raw, 2010). Among other things, the policy may contain:

- Details of the nature of the school's early identification and screening procedures, and how the child's needs are determined.
- Protocols for assessing individual needs and monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of interventions.
- Information on the development and review of individual education plans.
- Outline of the role of parents in the assessment process.
- Outline of the specific responsibilities of staff members and other professionals in coordinating assessment and IE provision.
- How the student is involved in decision-making and planning.
- How students with disabilities are engaged in the activities of the school, together with their typical peers.
- Arrangements for providing access by students with disabilities, to the mainstream curriculum.
- Ethical considerations – which include issues such as parental consent, confidentiality, and record keeping.
- Arrangements for dealing with complaints from parents regarding IE provision within the school (Winter and O'Raw, 2010).

It is vital to consciously consider cultural factors when planning for and implementing IE. This would require identifying factors that can facilitate inclusion – and then capitalising on them. For example, as a result of their extended family practice, Basotho parents felt that when a teacher spends more time with the children who needed help with learning, it helps to develop a sense of community responsibility in the children (Stubbs, 1995). This suggests that the level of trust is high in the Basotho people, which makes it easier to convince parents to take their children with disabilities to mainstream school. This is contrary to the reactions of parents in the global 'North', who usually feel that their children are not getting their fair share of attention (Stubbs, 1995). The cultural factors that can be obstacles to inclusion will also have to be identified and harmonised with inclusion principles. For example, these include an over-emphasis on academic achievement and examinations as opposed to a well-rounded development of children, and the pre-existence of a separate special education system as opposed to an inclusive system (Miles, 2002).

2.7.2 Leadership

In the context of this study, it was apparent that the success of IE relies upon the habitus of education leaders. This is because the leaders have authority to align their habitus (understanding of IE) with the capital (teacher skills and learner needs) and the field (curriculum and education policies). This means that IE can materialise in schools that have visionary leaders (principals and teachers) – whose vision is embedded in the IE principles. The leader must demonstrate inclusive values and develop the positive ethos and environment for learning that form the basis of quality education. He (or she) should make his/her vision and inclusive values and beliefs overt in all aspects of school life, and should organise his/her school in ways that avoid labelling or categorising of learners. He/she is expected to actively work to promote positive responses to differences that include learners by extending what is already available in their usual learning environment. Principals must ensure that teacher and learner wellbeing is central to all policies, and that this is evident in all practices. For this to happen, he/she might develop support teams to assist with the academic, social and medical needs of both teachers and learners. He/she must encourage and empower staff to develop their capacity and competence to meet the diversity of needs through different approaches, and must also encourage staff members to contribute their expertise to the development of the whole school learning community (Borg, Hunter and Sigurjonsdottir, 2011; McLoughlin and Rouse, 2000).

Furthermore, the principal should be able to support staff to reflect on their practice and to become autonomous life-long learners. He/she should manage resources effectively and must ensure that the staff members reflect and respect the diversity of learners in the school. He/she must carefully plan for teachers to have manageable workloads – this includes issues such as class size and the number of children identified as having impairments or difficulties in learning. The principal should be able to motivate subordinates (teachers) by putting in place reward systems for teachers who show extra skills and commitment. This can be done through promotion or grading systems, and not through a parallel, special system (Borg, Hunter and Sigurjonsdottir, 2011; SCF, 2002).

Furthermore, visionary leaders should be able to: (a) use sources of funding creatively to ensure physical access to buildings and appropriate support (including aids/information and communication technology [ICT]) for all learners; (b) develop effective monitoring, self-review and learner-centred evaluation that takes account of the achievement of all learners, as well as their academic outcomes; (c) use the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation to inform planning and strategic improvement to develop the school's capacity to support the best possible progress for all learners; (d) provide effective pastoral support to all learners and staff, and work to mediate external pressures by developing a clear rationale for approaches taken by the school; (e) manage specialist staff, and internal and external networks to take joint responsibility and work in partnership to facilitate access to the curriculum and extracurricular activities for all learners; and (f) communicate effectively with the local community, interdisciplinary support services and specialist settings, to ensure a holistic and co-ordinated approach to learners and their families that recognises the importance of meeting broader needs in order to enhance learning (Borg, Hunter and Sigurjonsdottir, 2011; Dettmer, Thurston and Dyck, 2005).

2.7.3 Teacher skills and teaching strategies (teachers' capital)

It is argued that teachers are the most valuable human resources available for promoting inclusive practices, and hence their habitus and capital must be orientated towards IE. Thus, "[if] they (teachers) do not like or believe in inclusion, then they can become a major barrier to progress" (Miles, 2005:13). Many teachers are, however, ill-prepared for inclusive classrooms. According to Naicker (2006), teachers need in-service training for successful inclusive classrooms to become a reality. It is believed that the training they have received (if any), has focused on teaching academic skills in a directive style to whole classes of pupils. While this approach has its own advantages (Westwood, 2007), children all learn at their own paces (those with and without disabilities). Thus, the contemporary teacher training programmes should be reviewed so that teachers can be better equipped with the necessary skills that will enable them to assess the learning needs of individual pupils, manage more individualised learning programmes, and be equipped with a wider range of teaching techniques and methods (McConkey and Bradley, 2007).

Just as Desktop Review (2013) proposes, a change in pre-service teacher training programmes has to be complemented by in-service courses, so that the existing cadre of teachers can be re-skilled for a changing education system. Lesotho can provide a good example on how this can be done. In Lesotho, the MOET used to organise weekend training courses for groups of local school teacher representatives on different aspects of disability. These were led by “master teachers” who had been sent on specialised training courses – for example on teaching children with visual impairments. These teachers in turn passed on their learning to mainstream school teachers (McConkey and Bradley, 2007).

The idea that teacher education can contribute to the promotion of successful teaching of children with disabilities in mainstream schools is also supported, among others, by Desktop Review (2013) and Naicker (2006). However, they raise concerns about the effectiveness of an in-service approach to the training of teachers:

- (a) Short workshops are widespread but ineffective.
- (b) People other than those for whom the in-service is provided, frequently select topics.
- (c) Follow-up support for ideas and practices introduced during in-service programmes occurs in only a very small minority of cases.
- (d) Follow-up evaluation occurs infrequently.
- (e) In-service programmes rarely address the individual needs and concerns of participants.

Mittler *et al.* (2004) propose that teacher development should be based on:

- Active learning – encouraging participants to engage with opportunities for learning.
- Negotiation of objectives – taking account of the concerns and interests of individual participants.
- Demonstration of practical work and feedback.
- Continuous evaluation.

- Support.

Inclusive schools require a professional community of support among teachers and support staff. Schools can be effective when everybody in the school works as a team, and preferably when those teams have some members as the specialists who have worked for (or are working in) special schools (Winter and O'Raw, 2010). Successful inclusion supposes that no one teacher can or ought to be expected to have all the expertise required to meet the educational needs of all students in the classroom (Dettmer, Thurston and Dyck, 2005). Thus, the mathematics teacher may bring mathematics expertise, while the specialist teacher bridges the gap between his/her speciality and that of the mathematics teacher. The team is expected to work hard to make classes inclusive, and to demolish the barriers to learning and participation. All staff members must show commitment to this task as a value for children – and should be able to articulate the reasons for their belief, be willing to defend this practice against critics, and be willing to struggle, learn and seek answers when specific approaches do not seem to be working for some students (Dettmer *et al.*, 2005; Winter and O'Raw, 2010).

Teachers need to be flexible and willing to adapt curriculum and classroom instruction to meet the learning needs of students – both with and without disabilities. They should collaborate with critical stakeholders to ensure that learning takes place. They are expected to have practical skills on instruction, communication, collaboration, alternative forms of evaluation, classroom management, conflict resolution, and how to adapt the curriculum and cooperative learning strategies – and they should also have the confidence to use these skills (Maguvhe, 2006; UNESCO, 2009; Hornstra, Denessen, Bakker, van den Bergh and Voeten, 2010; Hamill, Jantzen and Bargerhuff, 1999). Helpful teaching/learning strategies, in this regard, include co-operative teaching/learning, individualised planning, the Socratic Method, inquiry-based (discovery) learning, collaborative problem-solving, heterogeneous grouping, and differentiation. Furthermore, information/instruction can be delivered or shared by using the following strategies identified by Nsamenang (2011:296-298):

Lecture method – presents factual material in a direct, logical manner and contains experience which inspires and stimulates thinking. It is useful for large groups.

Lecture with discussion – involves the audience, and thus the audience can question, clarify and challenge ideas or concepts.

Panel of experts – allows experts to present different opinions. It can provoke better discussion than a one-person discussion and a frequent change of speakers keeps attention from lagging.

Brainstorming – a listening exercise that allows creative thinking for new ideas. It encourages full participation, because all ideas are equally recorded. It draws on group's knowledge and experience, and the spirit of congeniality is created. Through this approach, it is possible that one idea can spark off other ideas.

Videotape – an entertaining way of teaching content and raising issues. It keeps a group's attention and stimulates discussion.

Class Discussion – this pools ideas and experiences from group(s), is effective after a presentation, film or experience that needs to be analysed, and allows everyone to participate in an active process.

Small (focus) group discussion – allows participation of everyone, as people often feel more comfortable in small groups; often results in group consensus.

Case study – develops analytic and problem-solving skills, allowing for exploration of solutions for complex issues, and also allowing students to apply new knowledge and skills.

Role-playing – introduces a problem situation dramatically and provides opportunity for people to assume roles of others and thus appreciate another point of view. It allows for exploration of solutions and provides opportunity to practise learned skills.

Report-back session – allows for a large group discussion of role plays, case studies, and small group exercises, gives people a chance to reflect on experience, and each group takes responsibility for its operation.

Worksheet/survey – allows people to think for themselves without being influenced by others, and individual thoughts can then be shared in a large group.

Values clarification exercise – provides opportunity to explore values and beliefs and allows people to discuss values in a safe environment.

The common African education-delivery strategies include storytelling, mental arithmetic, and community song and dance (Abangwana, 2011). Clearly, these are

direct modes of information transmission. This approach to teaching and learning is supported by Winter and O'Raw (2010), who argue that most students with learning difficulties learn better when provided with direct, explicit and intensive instruction. Using this approach, the curriculum and tasks to be learned are carefully analysed, and then each skill is taught in sequence. Teachers state and explain clearly what is being taught, and how it is to be done (Winter and O'Raw, 2010). The advantages of this approach include increasing attention and academic engagement, raising the attainments of all students, significantly reducing the prevalence of learning failure, and providing opportunities to record success – which in turn motivates pupils and helps to keep them on task (Westwood, 2007). Ideally, the delivery method(s) in a classroom has/have to be dictated by student learning styles and ability levels (Tchombe, 2011).

Teachers in inclusive schools are also encouraged to gain knowledge of assistive technology (AT) – for example Braille. AT commonly refers to products, devices or equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified or customised, that are used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities (Mbangwana, 2011). These products (e.g. audiometers, radios, video-cassette recorders, screen magnifiers, and Braille translations) can enable individuals with disabilities to accomplish tasks, and assist them with communication and education so that they can achieve greater independence and thereby improve their quality of life. Acquaintance with sign language can also help create rapport between teachers and children with deafness and hearing loss. In Mukhopadhyay *et al.*'s (2009) qualitative research, the participants were of the opinion that all special education teachers should have knowledge of sign language and Braille. For these teaching/learning methods to be successful, they need to be embedded in the overall context of effective teaching – based on assessment and evaluation, high expectations, direct instruction, and feedback (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education [EADSNE], 2003).

Brown and Shumba (2011) believe that “Madiba Magic” can serve as a guiding principle to inclusive school practices:

“When teachers value differences during their teaching, they can in turn encourage their students to be open about their life-worlds. If what students do at home is never mentioned or is considered strange by teachers and other students, they may refuse to speak their home language, eat their traditional foods, wear their traditional clothes or follow their traditional religious practices. Teachers need to recognise these issues and understand that such practices would be counter to the spirit of the Madiba Magic” (Brown and Shumba, 2011:540).

Thus, effective teachers are those who understand a child’s development and learning –in addition to subject matter (Wedell, 2008). According to Attfield and Williams (2003), special school leaders suggested that for mainstream staff to increase their confidence and skills, their training and development must encompass a wider scope than course attendance alone. Teacher training for the purpose of equipping teachers with skills to support children with disabilities is a requirement of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). OFSTED (2006) demonstrates the positive impact that well trained staff can have on student attainment. However, MacBeath, Galton, Steward, MacBeath and Page (2006) indicate that, in practice, training is not always appropriate for meeting teacher needs.

It is worth reiterating that a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning is IE’s benchmark. Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2010) summarise the distinction between learner-centred teaching practices and traditional teaching practices, and this is presented in table 2.7.3 (below):

Table 2.7.3: Teacher-centred versus learner-centred practices.

Learner-centred approaches	Traditional approaches
Person-centred	Curriculum-centred
Self-directed	Teacher-directed
Democratic	Hierarchical
Child-centred	Teacher-centred
Process (how)	Content (what)
Constructing understanding	Covering subject matter
Inquiry-based	Knowledge-based
Thinking	Memorising
Relationship	Instruction
Experiential methods	Lecture

Cooperation	Competition or individualism
Active	Passive
Learning	Teaching
Criterion referencing	Norm referencing
Showing	Telling
Facilitating	Professing
Libratory pedagogy	Banking model

(Based on Cornelius-White and Harbaugh [2010:xxiv]).

After conducting research in the United States, Philippines, Brazil, Germany, Austria, the UK and Canada – in terms of investigating the efficacy of learner-centred instruction – Cornelius-White (2007) concluded that learner-centred instruction was a key factor in student success.

In brief, IE can materialise in schools when teachers are empowered in the following skills:

- Orientation on IE.
- Training on learner-centred education.
- Training on how to develop a school-based support service for children with disabilities.
- Methods and models of inclusive practice.
- Ability to become a reflective learner, conducting ongoing research to diagnose areas of need.
- Training in collaborative teaching.
- Training on collaborative decision-making and conflict resolution.
- Management of differentiation in the classroom.
- Training on how to adapt the curriculum to the individual learner's needs.
- Flexible evaluation methods based on the learner's pace of learning.
- Development of a resource-based learning environment.
- Skills on how to involve parents in their teaching.
- Skills on how to create a positive learning climate in the classroom.

(Van Zyl, 2002)

2.7.4 Curriculum, assessment and material resources

Among the developments that are envisaged for successful implementation of IE, is the provision of a more diversified curriculum – as there is no doubt that an emphasis on a “wholly” academic curriculum excludes many pupils, and not just those with disabilities (McConkey and Bradley, 2007). The exclusion is exacerbated by education systems that require children to pass examinations before they can proceed to the next class/grade (for example, Lesotho’s system). With such education systems, the best schools are those that excel in national examinations. With an exclusive emphasis on traditional test-taking formats, learners with special educational needs will appear to be a big challenge, and schools will be inclined not to take them on. Traditionally, curricula for students with disabilities tend to concentrate on a narrow range of skills. While the development of such skills is essential, the provision of a broader range of opportunities is now recognised as a more effective model (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2001).

Maguvhe (2006) and Madigan (2011) argue that adapting the curriculum to meet learner needs is an essential component of IE. This implies balancing priorities according to the strengths, needs and circumstances of the particular student, and also the nature of the disability. For example, for students with intellectual disabilities, the focus may be on self-help and daily living skills. Students with hearing impairment will need priority to be given to vocabulary development and oral-aural communication. Students with emotional and behavioural problems will however need a curriculum which includes self-management skills and building self-esteem (Winter and O’Raw, 2010).

Based on the above, teachers need to be trained in these new curricula approaches, and, in addition, educational authorities need to redesign the curricula and examination systems to make them inclusive. This will require (among other things) developing a more diversified curriculum in schools – that includes practical skills such as animal husbandry, brick laying, and crop production. Westwood (2007) stresses that what constitutes progress varies, depending on the child. Therefore, there must be greater freedom for teachers to accommodate, modify and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils – for example, through developing

other skills (such as those related to hygiene) for those who are at the early stages of acquiring literacy or numerical skills; and using alternatives to examinations to assess learner competence (e.g. through completion of practical tasks, using informal assessments, portfolio assessment, self-assessment and peer-assessment) (McConkey and Bradley, 2007; Westwood, 2007; Lerner, 2003).

According to Westwood (2007), informal assessments are both useful and practical, as they typically involve the ordinary activities and materials used on a daily basis in the classroom. Successful completion of classroom and homework assignments and a student's participation in class activities and attendance, all carry the potential to reinforce positive behaviour and to encourage participation. Informal assessments are believed to have the potential to benefit all students, as they involve goals which are achievable by all students, and do not differentiate between those with additional needs and their typical peers. Rewards can be given for success in such tasks, and these might include certificates of achievement or the opportunity to engage in a favourite activity.

Portfolio assessment involves collecting multiple samples of the student's work over a period of time. This may include fully completed work or work which reflects their best effort in a key skill or subject area. Additional information may also be contributed by other stakeholders – for example parents and other professionals. The purpose of the portfolio is to display concrete examples of the student's progress over time, and this can be a great confidence booster, so giving students a record of progress which they can share with others (Lerner, 2003).

Older students may be offered an opportunity to organise their own portfolios. Self-assessment offers students the opportunity to be directly involved in their own assessment, and can motivate learners because it gives them an opportunity to identify and set their own learning goals. The use of self-assessment can promote self-directed learning and improves motivation in all students (Lerner, 2003). However, it is considered to be particularly helpful for students with disabilities or learning difficulties, because it cultivates independent learning and builds confidence. A variation on this tool could be to involve students in assessing their peers – providing feedback and highlighting achievements. This approach needs

careful guidance and structuring, but can be fun and morale boosting. Group work can also be peer-assessed and improves peer interactions and cooperative learning (Winter and O'Raw, 2010). The accommodations and test modifications appropriate to student needs should be documented and formally agreed upon with the involvement of parents and students. This can increase/improve attention, motivation, engagement, the student-teacher relationship, and student independence in terms of learning (Norwich and Lewis, 2001).

UNESCO (2009) indicates that an inclusive curriculum addresses the child's cognitive, emotional, social and creative development. It is based on the four pillars of education – learning to know, do, be and live together. It has a fundamental role to play in encouraging tolerance and promoting human rights, and is also a powerful tool for transcending cultural, religious, gender and other differences. It involves shattering negative stereotypes – not only in textbooks, but also in teacher's attitudes and expectations. As per UNESCO (2009), multilingual approaches in education, in which language is recognised as an integral part of a student's cultural identity, can act as a source of inclusion.

Lesotho's neighbour, the Republic of South Africa, adopted an IE policy only after the end of apartheid (Republic of South African Department of Education, 2003). At this time, the Department of Education undertook an initiative to review the curriculum used during the apartheid era. This curriculum seemed to be teacher-centred and content-based. It was changed to one that was learner-centred and that aimed to meet the diverse range of learner needs: "Outcomes-based Education" (OBE). OBE aims to increase the knowledge of learners, and develop their critical thinking, understanding, skills, values and attitudes – so that they may become successful individuals in their society (Schoeman and Manyane, 2002). Later, OBE was replaced with the revised curriculum – the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). CAPS was progressively introduced from the beginning of 2012 and it is aimed at equipping learners – irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability – with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country (South Africa) (South Africa, 2011).

On the other hand, Botswana (a country with similar cultural and linguistic roots to Lesotho) has a balanced approach to IE – by keeping special schools for students with disabilities that were introduced by missionaries and by providing more inclusive approaches in government schools (Mukhopadhyay *et al.*, 2009). In order to improve the education of people with special educational needs, Botswana formulated several policies. These include: the Revised National Policy on Education (1994), the Pastoral Policy in Secondary Education (2000), and the Inclusive Education Policy (2011). The Inclusive Education Policy has enabled Botswana to move from the narrow approaches of the older policies that focused on addressing disabilities and special needs in children – to a broader approach of addressing the diverse needs in children (IE). Nonetheless, just like all other African countries, Botswana also faces challenges relating to a lack of skilled labour, over-populated classrooms, lack of accountability, resource barriers, and stakeholder fear that the policy will be difficult to implement (Desktop Review, 2013; Mukhopadhyay *et al.*, 2009).

Although it is argued that lack of facilities and teaching materials (such as maps, charts and other illustrative devices) is a major impediment to the implementation of IE, Kristensen, Loican-Omagor and Onen (2003) suggest that the production of low-cost educational materials can be a potential solution to this problem. Adequate funding will enable the purchase of appropriate teaching materials. Thus, appropriate policies which include sufficient funding for teaching materials, are indispensable for the successful implementation of IE.

2.7.5 Communication

Information helps people to make proper decisions and choices, and helps them to develop coping strategies to overcome problems. Therefore, communication is an important tool for working successfully with all stakeholders in education. Russel (2005) believes that open and constant communication is essential for effective collaboration between schools, parents and the wider community, and can help foster a shared sense of purpose among all stakeholders. Norris and Closs (2003) concur, stressing that keeping parents and other stakeholders informed can also help prevent any misunderstandings – especially when there is a mismatch between the values and aims of the family and those of the school. Information can be

distributed to parents and others in different ways, for example by using printed material, the telephone, newspaper and television advertisements, face-to-face meetings, and also the internet (Winter and O'Raw, 2010).

Winter and O'Raw (2010) recommend that parents be given access to the school policy documents on inclusion. This helps to inform them about the school's ethos in relation to inclusion, the scope of education provision and support services, and also the school's admission and "exclusion" (if any) policies. This information may assure parents that appropriate and adequate facilities are available for their children, and that their children will not suffer as a result of being included in mainstream classrooms.

Engaging with parents through face-to-face meetings is highly recommended by Winter and O'Raw (2010). The authors believe this can foster a deeper sense of connection and involvement with the school, and helps to address individual concerns. Although this approach may place high demands on time and staff resources, it potentially offers a valuable opportunity for parents to talk about relevant issues, so enabling them to clarify their thinking and providing a necessary emotional relieve.

Still adhering to the policy of inclusion, a school has to take into account the diverse backgrounds and cultures of parents and other stakeholders, in order to be sensitive to possible barriers to communication. It has to ensure full participation by parents (Nasen, 2000). English is a second language in Lesotho (though it is a medium of instruction in Lesotho secondary schools), and therefore some stakeholders may not be conversant in it. It is therefore important that all information provided be written in meaningful and simple language (English or Sesotho), as a lack of confidence in speaking the language may deter some stakeholders from further involvement. Thus, attempts should be made to use interpreters/translators to help with communication (DfES, 2001). Students who use English as their second language may experience linguistic difficulties and somehow feel that they are not competent enough to be able to understand some of their learning materials. The Department of Education, Republic of South Africa [DERSA] (2002) states that second language learners are

often subjected to low expectations, discrimination, and lack of cultural peers – as compared to their peers who are more conversant with the language.

Parents need information about the nature of their children's additional needs, services available, educational progress, and emotional and behavioural issues. Most parents appreciate being given detailed information about parent support groups, and this type of information may help to reduce isolation. Parents may also seek advice about how to respond to and encourage the child with disabilities through play or other activities at home. It may be useful, therefore, to provide parents with information about their children's conditions and what services and support are available outside the schools. Parents often find voluntary organisations to be useful for providing them with information about inclusion and its implications (Quinn, 2001).

It has been pointed out in section 2.7.3, above, that there may be learners who cannot speak due to their physical, intellectual or mental disability – and that they will need AT, for example Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) strategies, in order for them to be part of the learning community. AAC refers to the supplementation or replacement of natural speech and/or writing, using aided and unaided symbols (Dada and Alant, 2002). In this regard, unaided communication refers to symbols that require only parts of the body (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, signs and speech) to facilitate communication, whereas aided communication refers to symbols that use an external device or aid to facilitate communication (e.g. devices and communication boards) (Mpya, 2007). In order to ensure there is rapport within a class, teachers are encouraged to:

- Use simple, clear and consistent language.
- Take into consideration *inter alia* non-verbal communication, body language, tone of voice, and facial expression.
- Use welcoming and empowering language.
- Be flexible in their communication methods for the benefit of those with speech and hearing impairments or those whose mother tongue is different from the language of instruction.

- Create regular communication breaks to accommodate short concentration and attention spans.
- Ensure that all children can see, hear and listen properly (Save the Children [SCF], 2002).

2.7.6 Physical environment of the school

Once children with disabilities have arrived at school, there are physical access issues to consider with regard to entering the school buildings, and ease of movement around the teaching and recreation areas. Remedying such issues includes improving the sanitation facilities and quality of light in classrooms, and adaptations to accommodate wheelchair users – such as the installation of ramps, widening doors, lowering writing-boards (chalk-boards) and improvements to flooring, paths and road surfaces (Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development [DCDD], 2006; Mpya, 2007).

SCF (2002:59-60) proposes some physical environment-related issues that might improve learning in schools:

- When erecting new schools, avoid building steps; make gentle slopes.
- Replace steps with ramps and handrails.
- Doorways must be wide enough to allow a wheelchair to pass, if necessary.
- Doors should open easily, with handles fixed at appropriate levels.
- Toilet arrangements should enable accessibility to all and also safety and privacy.
- There should be accessible dining areas, with suitable seating.
- Classroom seating should enable movement, sufficient support and double seating for children who may benefit from sitting with a friend.
- Writing-boards should be fixed at appropriate heights for all learners.
- The walls should be painted white for sufficient brightness, and extra lighting should be provided where necessary.
- Ensuring sufficient ventilation and suitable temperatures for concentration.

- Design play areas such that they enable children with different impairments to engage in play with others.

According to SCF (2002:59), “Learning can be more accessible to all children when safety and comfort in schools is ensured.” Traditionally, Basotho use horses and donkeys for mobility impairment. However, Stubbs (1996) found that wheelbarrows were also used by students to carry those to school who cannot walk by themselves. Some rural-mountainous places in Lesotho do not permit use of wheelchairs, however, let alone the fact that most households cannot afford them. Worse still, Mbangwana (2011) indicates that Africans have been unable to design technologies that can be used to assist people who have visual impairment or a hearing problem.

2.7.7 Schools’ external links

The significance of links between inclusive schools and their external agencies cannot be over-emphasised. There may however be instances where a school does not have the expertise or some of the resources required to ease inclusion. In such cases, the school might benefit from association with external agencies such as parents, Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) workers, health centres, other professionals, government agencies and public services, community elders, religious leaders, adults with disabilities, and the children themselves. This linkage will enable the school to offer a wider range of services and can enhance the school’s capability to support inclusion (Winter and O’Raw, 2010; SCF, 2002).

Although all the external agencies are very important to the survival of schools, the involvement of parents at all stages of planning and implementation is a key principle of inclusion (Porter, 2002; Winter and O’Raw, 2010; SCF, 2002). This draws (partly) from the rights of parents to be involved and to have their wishes respected with regard to their children’s education, and the benefits which arise from continuity between their home care and educational environments (Porter, 2002). Some of the benefits of involving parents at all levels of planning and decision-making include: First, parents have the ‘insider perspective’ and are the experts as far as their own children are concerned. They also have unique strengths, knowledge and experience for contributing to the shared view of a child’s needs and the best ways

of supporting them. Second, parents can gain the extra support and guidance they may require to understand and cope with their children's atypical needs. Third, parental involvement promotes mutual respect and understanding between home, school, and the wider community. Fourth, parents' involvement in their children's education contributes to children's positive attitudes towards learning (Winter and O'Raw, 2010).

In Lesotho, the networking of all stakeholders started when the inclusion policy was developed in 1989. Key stakeholders included different departments in the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Welfare, Teacher Associations, Disabled Peoples' Organisations, and key institutions such as the National University of Lesotho, Lesotho College of Education, National Curriculum Centre, teachers from the Resource Centre, Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) personnel, and also Parents' Associations (Khatleli *et al.*, 1995). Attempts to involve special school staff (SSS) at the planning stage however met with much resistance. This was partly because SSS feared their schools would be closed down, as almost all the existing Special Education Centres in Lesotho were (and still are) non-governmental. As Khatleli *et al.* (1995) contests, these schools provide long-term care facilities which are expensive and disruptive to family life. They lack clear objectives and have insufficient staff to offer a sound education. Nonetheless, the recommendation from Csapo's (1987) report clearly states they should have a role as resource centres, and so there has been a continuing effort to assure the SSS that they do have an important role – albeit a different one.

A study identifying the possible stressors for South African teachers in the implementation of IE, revealed that the most stressful areas include the parents of learners with specific needs having limited contact with teachers and the parents' perceived lack of understanding of learner capabilities (Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff and Swart, 2001).

The factors for implementing IE that are discussed above, are key to this study as the study investigated Lesotho secondary school teacher perceptions of IE – which will reflect (among other things) in their understanding of learner-centred approaches to teaching and learning, the adaptation of curriculum and assessment strategies, communication strategies, how their schools link with external agencies, how they

conduct leadership within their schools, and also the extent to which the physical environment of their schools accommodates learners with disabilities.

The next section considers some of the benefits of IE.

2.8 Benefits of inclusive education

Inclusive education can serve as a catalyst for change, because it not only enhances education within schools but also advocates awareness of human rights and leads to a reduction in social discrimination between poor and rich. IE helps to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion (SCF, 2002, 2006; Shannon, 2004; Miles, 2005; Stubbs, 2002). It was argued in chapter 1 that families that are struggling with a disability are more likely to be trapped in poverty. IE offers the practical skills and knowledge needed to break out the cycle of poverty and exclusion – and goes further by providing an opportunity to children and adults with disabilities to challenge prejudice, become visible, and gain the confidence to speak out for themselves and build their own future within the mainstream of society (DFID, 2010; Miles, 2005).

IE enables children with disabilities to stay with their families and communities. It opposes the traditional practice of placing children with disabilities away from their homes and families to attend residential special schools. Although there may be educational benefits to attending a special school, it is believed that the separation of children with disabilities from their families and communities often confirms society's prejudice towards them – denying them their rights to be at home with their family and to be involved in the community, and sometimes making them vulnerable to abuse (SCF, 2002).

Research suggests the positive effects of inclusion for children both with and without disabilities. A USA study of students with learning difficulties compared a 'pull out' model of support with inclusion, and found that the inclusion group did better on several academic measures (Rea, McLaughlan and Walther-Thomas, 2002). A similar result emerged in several other studies: for example, a Boston study by Peterson and Hittie (2002), and also Cole, Waldron and Majd's (2004) study. Salend (2001) found that students with disabilities that are put into inclusion programmes

have more engaged instructional time and greater exposure to academic activities – possibly leading to greater academic success.

In Norway, Myklebust (2002) compared two groups of second-level students with general learning problems over a three-year period. Generally, those taught in ordinary classrooms made better progress than those taught in small groups. At the end of three years, 40% of those taught in ordinary classrooms were academically on schedule with their peers. However, the dropout rates reflected the opposite effect. Lindsay (2007) suggests there may be a complex effect where special class support was beneficial in protecting against school dropout in the first year – but was less effective in terms of academic progress.

There are also role models in the regular education setting who can facilitate communication, and social and adaptive behaviours. Regular education students can provide examples for appropriate classroom and social behaviour for children with disabilities. This modelling often happens naturally, since the expectations in the regular education classroom are relatively high. An inclusive setting enables children with disabilities to develop friendships with their peers – which leads to greater acceptance by their peers in and out of the school community. Through inclusion, students with disabilities have their self-respect and self-esteem enhanced. When they start to make connections with their peers and teachers, students with disabilities begin to feel a sense of self-worth, and they also begin to see themselves as individuals who can share some of the same experiences and opportunities as their non-disabled peers (Shannon, 2004).

Children without disabilities also benefit from an inclusive setting; it enables them to be more accepting and understanding of differences among individuals. Through contact with students with disabilities – children without disabilities can learn that physical, intellectual and emotional differences are part of everyone's world (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion, 2004). They gain a small taste of the diversity of society within the classroom, which might help to create tolerance and respect for others with diverse characteristics.

Moreover, the exposure of children with disabilities to non-disabled peers can help the latter develop sensitivity towards their classmates' limitations – thereby enabling them to develop empathy. This can also help to develop important skills such as leadership skills, increased abilities to help and teach others, mentoring, tutoring, self-empowerment, and self-esteem (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion, 2004).

Peck, Staub, Gallucci and Schwartz (2004:135) assert that "... non-disabled children enrolled in inclusive classrooms [make] greater academic gains on curriculum-based assessment measures than those enrolled in [non-inclusive schools]." In brief, almost all experts who advocate IE strongly believe that it has academic benefits for both children with and without disabilities (see, e.g., Miles, 2002; Mukhopadhyay *et al.*, 2009; Mukhopadhyay *et al.*, 2012; Magweva, 2007; McConkey and Bradley, 2007; McDonald, 2005; Shannon, 2004).

Teachers also benefit from IE settings: It makes them aware that all students have strengths that can benefit the entire class and that can be built upon to create a meaningful school experience. Inclusion also allows teachers to learn new teaching techniques that can help all students – as the traditional methods of teaching (e.g. lecturing, note taking, and demonstration) may not be appropriate for all students. Moreover, inclusion helps teachers to develop teamwork skills. Inclusion also requires regular contact with many other stakeholders and colleagues, which will inevitably promote teamwork (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion, 2004).

2.9 Disadvantages of inclusive education

In spite of considerable research that indicates positive results, inclusion has not been perceived positively by all people. Some scholars, for example Shannon (2004), perceive inclusion as driven by an unrealistic expectation that money will be saved, while ignoring the possibility that trying to force all students into the inclusive settings is just as coercive and discriminatory as trying to force all students who have disabilities and/or special educational needs into the mould of special education. Kavale (2000) argues that placing special education students in the regular classroom has the potential to consume too much of an already overworked teachers' attention. According to Kavale (2000), children with severe cognitive

disabilities and those with severe behavioural disorders, are more likely to be harmed than helped – because teachers do not usually have highly specialised training to deal with their needs.

Lack of skilled professionals and teachers makes quality service provision to children with disabilities and/or special educational needs very difficult (Dettmer *et al.*, 2005). Another critique is that students with high ability and remarkable talents too often do not receive instruction that is appropriately intensive enough for their needs in the inclusionary classroom. Opponents of inclusion believe that many inclusion movements are based on having children with disabilities sit in regular education classes – without ensuring that they participate fully in the educational programmes. This is deemed detrimental to the academic growth of children with disabilities (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion, 2004).

Furthermore, regular education classrooms may result in low self-esteem and a low self-concept in children with disabilities. Salend (2001) revealed that some students with disabilities reported that life in mainstream schools was characterised by fear, frustration, ridicule and isolation. It is believed that when in a regular education classroom, students with disabilities can see what their peers can do and what they cannot do, and consequently they often feel depressed, overwhelmed and academically inadequate compared to their non-disabled classmates. Bringing children with disabilities into mainstream schools may be problematic when the “mainstream students” are not ready to accept them. If this happens, those with disabilities will be easy targets for harassment, name-calling or teasing’, and this can cause stress and anxiety for those with disabilities, so rendering the inclusion initiatives unsuccessful (Preparing for Inclusion, 2004).

Some people oppose inclusion assuming that it may jeopardise the learning of students without disabilities in various ways – for example, students with disabilities may make involuntary vocalisations as a result of their disability. If this happens, those without disabilities will not be able to concentrate and their academic work will suffer (Preparing for Inclusion, 2004).

Students with disabilities often receive one-on-one attention, modified assignments and tests, and their workload is often smaller than that of their peers without disabilities. This can also lead to jealousy, resentment and bitterness among the students without disabilities towards their peers with disabilities – because of a perceived monopoly of services by those with disabilities (Preparing for Inclusion, 2004). Consequently, students without disabilities might start teasing and tormenting their classmates with disabilities, thereby inhibiting any positive relationships that were forming between the two groups of students.

The disadvantage of IE for mainstream teachers is that teachers may be constantly fearful. The teachers may fear they are going to fail with IE in their classrooms, as a result of inadequate training. This fear can result in a negative attitude towards inclusion and students with disabilities. It can also negatively impact on the teachers' confidence and competence level. Moreover, mainstream teachers may be reluctant to admit that they do not have all the answers to the challenges, and may feel uncomfortable with handing over any amount of control to another teacher (support teacher) in their own classrooms (Forest and Pearpoint, 2004). Finally, insufficient time for planning and collaboration may frustrate teachers, so adding to negative perceptions of inclusion.

Nonetheless, some scholars (e.g. Winter and O'Raw, 2010) take the view that negatives or perceived disadvantages of IE simply reveal limitations related to practice within schools which must be addressed – rather than a challenge to the principle of universal inclusion. Likewise, Farrell (2000) and Terzi (2010) suggest that some of the negatives or inconclusive findings about IE have more to do with the quality of teaching in the mainstream settings, rather than the inclusive nature of the placement. Succinctly put, "... many objections and perceived barriers disappear when the underlying concepts of inclusive education are thoroughly understood" (Stubbs, 2002:38). Consequently, the authors call for researchers to focus not on whether inclusion works, but rather on ways of making it work.

Teachers' attitudes (section 2.10 [b]) towards IE may be influenced by their education system (field) as well as their culture (cultural capital) – which on the other hand informs their understanding of IE (habitus). Therefore, it was hoped that in their

discussions about IE, the teachers would reveal their attitude towards IE in respect of the benefits and disadvantages they attach to it.

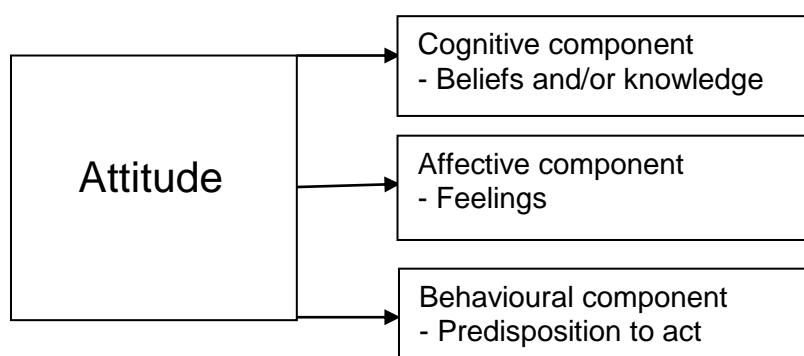
2.10 Potential barriers to inclusive education

Some scholars have also highlighted some potential barriers to the inclusion initiatives. These barriers are: "... those factors that lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, which leads to learning breakdown or which prevents learners from accessing educational provision ..." (DERSA, 2002:130-131). It may be that most of these barriers have already been highlighted in the preceding sections of this chapter. Those that are frequently highlighted include:

(a) *Lack of appropriate support for both teachers and students*: If proper support is not present, instructional time for students without disabilities could be compromised for those with disabilities (Mitchell, 2008).

(b) *Negative attitudes towards IE*: Almost every scholar who has studied teacher attitudes about IE, has concluded that these are highly influential in relation to IE (see e.g. De Boer, Pijl and Minnaert, 2011; Lambe and Bones, 2006; Salisbury, 2006; Jordan, Schwartz and McGhie-Richmond, 2009; Kniveton, 2004; Jordan *et al.*, 2010; Unianu, 2012). Positive attitudes of teachers impact on the success in IE, while negative attitudes impact negatively in terms of achieving inclusion (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009). The term 'attitude' is considered to have three components: cognitive, affective and behavioural (De Boer *et al.*, 2011; Leatherman and Niemeyer, 2005). As shall be seen in the discussion that follows, these three components are influenced by one's habitus.

Figure 2.10: The three components of the concept 'attitude' (De Boer *et al.*, 2011:334)



The cognitive component refers to beliefs, knowledge and views about an object or a particular issue. The affective component reflects one's feelings about something or towards an object. On the other hand, the behavioural component is one's tendency to act towards something in a particular way (De Boer *et al.*, 2011).

Some people continue to look at the education of children with disabilities from an individual or medical point of view – where the child is viewed as a problem. Then, attempts are made to adjust the child to the mainstream education situation. Consequently, regular schools continue to refuse admissions of children with severe disabilities, on the premise that they cannot cope in their schools. On the other hand, IE focuses on the system as needing adaptations, and the rights of the child as the basis of intervention (Hatchell, 2009; Khan, 2011; Dettmer *et al.*, 2005; The Health and Education Advice and Resource Team [HEART], 2013; SCF, 2002). Research suggests that attitudes may be changed gradually through training and support and also by offering newly trained teachers more concrete tools to meet diverse needs in their classrooms (HEART, 2013; Sharma and Deppeler, 2005).

(c) *Lack of skilled professionals and teachers:* Lack of skilled professionals and teachers has made quality service provision to children with disabilities very difficult. Hines (2001) revealed that many general education teachers feel they have not received enough training and lack the knowledge to effectively teach students with disabilities. Kotele (2000) revealed that South Africa and Lesotho are two countries that still have many limitations with regard to successful IE systems. The author pointed out lack of teaching and human resources as examples of these limitations. It is contested that teacher training can be provided, but specialised skills such as sign language and Braille need more time and constant practise. Therefore, it is reckoned that the best method to extend these technical subjects to a large number of teachers could be to include these elements in the curricula of the local teacher training programmes (Sharma and Deepler, 2005; Hatchell, 2009).

(d) *Physical access and poor infrastructure:* Lack of accessibility and poor infrastructure within schools have resulted in basic facilities such as toilets, some resource rooms, play-grounds, writing boards and water being inaccessible to some

students, and particularly those with disabilities. Some schools also do not have good quality, accessible educational materials for children to learn from and teachers to use. Considering the mountainous nature of Lesotho, travelling to and from school can be very difficult for children with disabilities (especially those with mobility challenges), and this can be used as an excuse for not sending such children to school (SCF, 2002; Mpya, 2007). Section 2.7.6 provides some strategies which will hopefully ameliorate accessibility and infrastructural challenges.

(e) *Poverty of families of children with disabilities*: It has been stressed in several sections of chapters one and two, that poverty and disability are intertwined or interwoven. Poverty cannot be divorced from hunger and the Basotho believe that hunger hampers progress in any job (*Tsie e fofa ka mokota* [one cannot do a proper job when hungry]). DERSA (2002) argued that learners who go to school without food usually experience emotional problems which affect their learning and development. Such learners are characterised by underperformance. Due to impoverishment, the learners usually lack proper school uniforms which means they may be humiliated by their peers – culminating in withdrawal from school (Mpya, 2007). Exclusion as a result of poverty is considered to be mainly an attitudinal problem. SCF (2002) asserted that educational programmes aimed at the poorest children may still exclude children with disabilities, with excuses about expense and lack of expertise being used. According to SCF (2002), it has been demonstrated in Mali that through awareness-raising – these attitudes can be successfully challenged.

The researcher considers that barriers to IE do not imply that it cannot work – because they can be addressed such that IE can proceed smoothly. In fact, IE can be promoted or hindered by so many factors. An extensive coverage of such factors is however beyond the scope of this research.

A summary of chapter 2 is presented in the next section.

2.11 Chapter two summary

Inclusive education has sparked international interest since the time when everyone's right to education was acknowledged in the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Since then, there has been a gradual move towards mainstream schools accommodating learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs – as opposed to the traditional practice of teaching such learners in special schools or alternative settings.

Nonetheless, it is still not clear what IE means, and how it should be implemented. It is believed that the complications relating to IE partly have a bearing in the cultural influence on the general education philosophy and practice. Consequently, different inclusion approaches or models have been employed worldwide. These include the Full Inclusion Model, the Partial Inclusion Model, the Medical Model, the Ecological Model, the Twin-Track Model, the Rights-Based Model, the In-and-Out Model, the Team-Teaching Model, the Peer-Tutoring Model, and the Rejection of Inclusion Model.

Despite apparent controversy about IE, scholars seem to agree about some basic principles that determine inclusion. It is agreed that:

- Mainstream education should serve children with diverse abilities and challenges.
- With appropriate networks of support, IE can benefit everyone in the school.
- Discrimination and/or exclusion from mainstream schooling should be avoided at all costs.
- Students should be actively involved in their own learning.
- Mainstream schools should be flexible in terms of curriculum, teaching methods, school culture and environment – in order to address individual student needs.

Furthermore, it is agreed that inclusion should be understood as a process, as being concerned with the identification and removal of barriers, and mostly concerned with learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion, or under-achievement.

In order for inclusion to materialise, it is necessary that it reflects in the school policy and state policy on education – which must be drafted in consultation with all key stakeholders. IE should be clearly understood and promoted by all stakeholders in the school. Thus, the principal, his/her subordinates (including teachers), as well as students, must have a common understanding of what inclusion means and requires. The teaching strategies, leadership styles, modes of communication, school curricula and assessment procedures, should all focus on promoting inclusion. Furthermore, the physical environment of the school – for example toilets, dining areas, and classroom seating – should promote ease of access by all students, including those with disabilities. Inclusion cannot work without a link between the school and external agencies such as parents, Community-Based Rehabilitation workers, health centres, professionals, government agencies and public services, community elders, religious leaders, disabled adults, and the children themselves.

The success of IE can bring many benefits. It can ameliorate poverty which is associated with disability. It can improve family bonds by enabling children with disabilities to study in nearby schools – meaning they can stay with their families and communities. It can improve both the social life and academic performance of children with and without disabilities. Among other things, IE can help children without disabilities to accept and learn how to live with their peers with disabilities, and it can enable teachers to be aware of the diverse abilities and strengths in all students, which can benefit the entire class, so creating a meaningful school experience. Inclusion also allows teachers to learn new teaching techniques that can help all students, and can also help teachers to develop teamwork skills.

The inclusive approach also has some critics. Some scholars think that it is unrealistic in terms of the philosophy behind it. In particular, they dispute the idea that all students can optimally benefit in an inclusive setting – partly due to a lack of skilled professionals and teachers. It is also believed that inclusion may result in low self-esteem and low self-concept in children with disabilities – when they realise that

they cannot merge with their peers without disabilities in undertaking some school activities. It may also be problematic when children without disabilities are not ready to accept their peers with disabilities – resulting in name-calling and harassment in the school. Some scholars also believe that children without disabilities cannot gain much from an inclusive setting in terms of academic work. The one-on-one attention that children with disabilities usually get is considered to have the potential to result in jealousy, resentment and bitterness among student without disabilities. Furthermore, mainstream teachers in inclusive settings may suffer from low self-esteem because of their fear of failure in relation to the IE concept.

Lastly, there are some potential barriers that may impede inclusion endeavours. These include lack of appropriate support for both teachers and students; negative attitudes toward IE; lack of skilled professionals and teachers; challenges related to physical access and poor infrastructure; and, lastly, poverty.

Chapter three exposes the procedure that was followed in terms of collecting and processing data.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter objectives

This chapter presents the research design and conceptual framework followed by the research methodology that has been adopted in this research study. It then relates how the schools and participants for the interviews were selected, and then illustrates how the collected data were processed and how the ethical issues that pertained to the study were handled. This is followed by a brief discussion of the preliminary interview used. Reliability and validity issues are also highlighted, and, lastly, information about the interview sessions is provided.

3.1 Research design and methodology

A qualitative approach was employed for several reasons. It enabled the researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding of teacher conceptualisations of IE – from their points of view (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). It was also possible to appreciate the teachers' experiences in this regard.

This research has adopted Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge's (2007) description of qualitative research as being a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest, and rather allows it to unfold naturally. Thus, this study attempted to grasp how teachers understand/conceptualise IE (a situation in its unique setting), and how they relate their understandings of their school educational practices/teaching approaches (a particular context). Qualitative research can study things in their natural settings and it is often concerned with trying to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning(s) that people bring to them (Creswell, 2007).

Hancock *et al.* (2007) stress the importance of understanding the interactions within a specific setting when carrying out qualitative research. Some scholars have criticised qualitative research – particularly through the interview approach – pointing out its failure to capture people's social interactions. They criticise this method as

being individualistic, focusing exclusively on the individual, and neglecting a person's embeddedness in social interactions (Hammersley, 2005). The researcher attempted to respond to this criticism by making use of focus-group interviews. Group interviews may bring up lively interpersonal dynamics and reveal the social interactions leading to the interview statements (Hammersley, 2005; Hancock *et al.*, 2007).

Qualitative research entails collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual data, in order to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest (Springer, 2010). As the purpose of this study was to understand some particular phenomena regarding teacher knowledge of IE, the qualitative approach was appropriate as a research method.

3.1.1 The case study

The qualitative research model that was employed is the case-study method. The case-study design has its philosophical roots in the interpretivist (constructivist) paradigm. A case study, as applied in this study, refers to an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context (Yin, 2002; Maree, 2007). From an interpretivist perspective, the typical characteristic of case studies is that they strive towards a comprehensive understanding of how participants relate and interact with one another in a specific situation, and how they make meaning of a phenomenon being studied. Hence, case studies offer a multi-perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation – but also the views of other relevant groups of actors and the interaction among them.

There are different types of case studies. Descriptive case studies describe the natural phenomena that occur within a particular setting (Schell, 1992; Zainal, 2007). The descriptive case study enabled the researcher to learn about different strategies that the secondary school teachers in Lesotho used in order to implement IE in their schools. On the other hand, exploratory case studies strive to investigate any phenomenon in a specific setting, and which serves as a point of interest for the researcher (Schell, 1992; Zainal, 2007). According to Yin (2003), an exploratory case

study is suitable for situations where the phenomenon being studied has no clear, single set of outcomes. The purpose of the current study was to investigate secondary school teachers' understanding of IE – a phenomenon which is understood differently in different contexts – and so an exploratory case study was also relevant. The above types of case studies are not mutually exclusive, and as argued by Zainal (2007:5): “There is no exclusivity between exploratory, descriptive ... case studies, in fact some of the best case studies are ... exploratory and descriptive.” Combining these two types of case studies helped the researcher to learn more about IE, to gain a deeper understanding of it through investigating its salient features in Lesotho's context, and ultimately to contributing to the Afrocentric literature on IE.

There is debate about whether the case-study method is acceptable as a scientific model of research. Worse still, there has been much confusion about what constitutes a case study (Easterbrook, Singer, Storey and Damian (2007:10). Some scholars state that the case-study method of research lacks rigour and provides very little for scientific generalisation. Nevertheless, Hancock *et al.* (2007) and Golafshani (2003) defend this method, arguing that it can allow for a “fuzzy” generalisation. Fuzzy generalisation allows for an element of uncertainty as researchers report on the possibilities of the findings being similar in another institution. Ekiz (2006) further argues that generalisation can be possible in a conventional manner by applying a concept of transferability (section 3.6). Thus, although the results of this study reflect only participant knowledge of IE in the context of their particular schools, it is possible that teachers who are not participants would have similar conceptualisations or perceptions of this concept – provided they are in similar situations to the participants in this study.

Case studies are also criticised for lacking rigour in terms of providing for “biased views to influence the direction of the findings” (Zainal, 2007). Flyvbjerg (2006) summarises other disadvantages of case studies as:

- They focus more on theoretical knowledge than practical knowledge.
- They are most useful for generating hypotheses than for testing them.

- It is often difficult to summarise specific case studies.
- They contain a bias toward verification.

Case studies are nevertheless still considered valuable research tools, as they are perceived as enabling researchers to “close in” on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice (Flyvbjerg, 2006:235). Furthermore, case studies enable researchers to obtain detailed and relevant data, so increasing the internal validity (Jacobsen, 2002), creating hypotheses, and helping researchers understand complex social phenomena (Yin, 2009). Murphy (2014) considers case studies to be non-prejudicial, in the sense that they enable researchers to handle and combine a variety of data-collection methods (e.g. documents, interviews and observations). In short, a case study can help one to gain a better understanding of how participants make meaning of the phenomenon being studied. The phenomenon under study in this research is teachers’ knowledge of IE – particularly inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs in regular schools. Thus, the researcher investigated Lesotho secondary school teacher knowledge of IE (a contemporary phenomenon) in the context of their own schools and/or country (real-life context), as he believed that this phenomenon may be understood differently in different contexts.

The case study was conducted through in-depth, semi-structured focus-group interviews. Interviewing is a specified form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject of discussion (Patton, 2002). Thus, the interview is a highly purposeful task that goes beyond ordinary conversation and can take several forms. This study used an interview type called the ‘interview guide approach’, or semi-structured open-ended interview. In this approach, topics and issues to be covered in the discussion are specified in advance in outline form, and the interviewer decides sequence and wordings (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). The approach is flexible (thus, questions can be asked in any sequence) and also situational (wording can be changed to suit the situation). However, it is important to note that interview flexibility in sequencing and wording can result in different responses, so reducing the comparability of responses (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). Interviews are considered to be a great source of

information for qualitative studies, as they provide a better understanding of the setting or the situation. In addition, they provide the interviewer with verbal and non-verbal responses from the participants and enable rapport to be developed between the interviewer and interviewees (Drew, Hardman and Hosp, 2008; Litosseliti, 2003). The interview schedule items were developed based on the aim and objectives of this study – as well as the literature in chapter two.

Through employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the interviewer could clarify ambiguous responses by asking probing questions. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to assess participant behaviour and experiences – leading to a holistic picture of progress, and the needs and challenges in their schools regarding inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs (Henning, Rensburg and Smit, 2004). Semi-structured interviews are a data-collection method, which is usually conducted face-to-face between the interviewer and interviewees – allowing the interviewer to control the process and allowing freedom for interviewees to express their thoughts (O'Leary, 2004). This type of interview is particularly helpful when a researcher seeks specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews (Dawson 2006), helped to elucidate concepts and problems, and allowed for the discovery of new aspects of the problem by exploring in detail the explanations supplied by the participants.

In semi-structured interviews, the wealth and quality of data gathered depend on the researcher's skill and the confidence inspired in the participants (Hancock *et al.*, 2007; Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000). In order to inspire the participants, the researcher explained to them (in the consent letters and prior to the interview sessions) how they could benefit from the research. The interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants and notes were taken during the conversations in order to capture none-verbal information that would not be tape-recorded (O'Donoghue, 2007).

It is common practice to use multiple data-collection methods when conducting a case study. Nonetheless, Woodside (2010) believes that even one method of data collection may suffice for providing ample information that will help a researcher gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. In line with this

thinking, Mukhopadhyay *et al.* (2009) used a focus-group interview as a single data-collection method in their case study entitled “Teacher trainees’ level of preparedness for inclusive education in Botswana secondary schools: Need for change.”

3.1.2 Focus groups

A focus group refers to a group of participants who can generate information on the topic provided by the researcher – through interacting and communicating (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Data emerge as participants discuss the topic among themselves, helped by prompts introduced to them by the researcher (Burton and Bartlett, 2005). In this way, participants bring their views to the surface, while the researcher listens. Meanwhile, an interviewer is expected to be attentive to the responses of the participants, so that he/she can identify new, emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied (Maree, 2007). Terrell (2011:2) points out that “in a focus group the researcher relies on visual and verbal cues to begin to establish rapport between the participants”. The richness of a focus-group interview is that it allows a researcher to enter the participants’ world and to access information from their lived experiences (Denscombe, 2007).

A potential challenge associated with focus groups, which the researcher had to overcome in order to improve the quality and reliability of his study, involved ensuring that everyone in the groups had real opportunities to contribute in the discussions. Cohen *et al.* (2007) and Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) indicate that in focus groups, people with more education or skills tend to dominate and speak more than those with less expertise in these areas. As aptly stated by the Ohio State University (2008:1): “Shy persons may be intimidated by more assertive persons.” With the current study, it was possible that teachers who had more experience in teaching children with disabilities and/or special educational needs might dominate those with less experience. The issue of experience was, however, taken into consideration when selecting the participants, and the importance of avoiding ‘supremacy’ was discussed with the participants prior to the interviews – and this was also made part of the ground rules.

Palomba and Banta (1999) stated that the data collected from focus-group discussions lack confidentiality and anonymity. Consequently, the ground rules stated that the use of identifying names would be avoided. Furthermore, the researcher was mindful that a case-study approach is not easy to undertake, as it involves good listening, questioning and observation skills with an unbiased mind (Johnson and Christensen, 2008).

On the positive side, focus-group research is considered to be valuable in terms of generating data in the participants' own words. This provides insights into the participants' real perceptions of the phenomenon being investigated. It is also maintained that participants may feel free to talk in a group, but not in an individual interview. Their interactions in the group may generate more discussion, which shall provide more information. In addition, participants can learn from each other. The Ohio State University (2008:1) stresses that focus-group discussions can enable participants to "feed off each other as they respond to each other's comments."

3.1.3 Sampling

This study used a sample of 12 secondary schools in the Maseru District – in which there are (or have been) some students with disabilities and/or special educational needs. The total number of secondary schools in the Maseru District is well over 50 (Lerotholi, 2001; Ntho, 2013). Participants were teachers with at least two years' teaching experience in classes which included some children with disabilities and/or special educational needs, as they were considered to have rich and relevant information. It is argued that direct experiences of including students with disabilities into mainstream settings is an essential aspect of shaping teachers' knowledge of and views towards inclusive settings (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000).

Six schools were drawn from rural regions and the other six from urban regions of the Maseru District. Two focus groups were constituted: one comprised teachers from rural schools and the other comprised teachers from urban schools. An ideal number of participants in a focus group are four to eight (Hancock *et al.*, 2007). Dawson (2006) advises researchers to opt for odd numbers when dealing with focus groups, as it may then be harder for participants to pair up in breakaway

conversations. The initial plan was to have seven teachers per group, but one participant did not arrive for the first interview. Thus, the researcher decided to work with six people per group. The sample sought to address maximum variability in terms of participant work locations. In doing so, the study attempted to provide a full and rich understanding of Lesotho secondary school teacher perceptions of IE. The participants were required to have an applicable teaching qualification: a degree, diploma, or certificate.

Purposive sampling (Dawson, 2006) with maximum variation was used to select the participants. Purposive sampling is used in “special situations where the sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind” (Maree, 2007:178), and where the researcher only targets the people whom he believes are rich in information related to the subject of the study. This sampling method was based on the fact that the researcher wanted to discover, understand and gain insight into Lesotho secondary school teacher knowledge of IE, and therefore had to select a sample from which the maximum could be learned. This increased the trustworthiness of the research (see Creswell, 2007; Golafshani, 2003). There are a few secondary schools in the Maseru District (and in Lesotho in general) in which there are (or have been) children with disabilities (Ntho, 2013), and so purposive sampling was used to select such schools. The schools were grouped on the basis of demographic locations within the Maseru District (urban and rural), and six schools were randomly selected from each group. Purposive sampling was used again to identify teachers who met the above-mentioned criterion in each school. Finally, one teacher was randomly selected among those who qualified in each school – while adhering to the ethical codes of research outlined later in section 3.4.

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 The preliminary interview

Before collecting the main data, the researcher conducted a preliminary interview to ensure that the questions in the interview schedule were comprehensible to the participants and that the data gathered would meet the requirements of the study. As Opie (2004) stresses, this type of study is important as it may help eliminate any

ambiguous, confusing or insensitive questions from the interview schedules. This was done in the Mafeteng District of Lesotho. The Maseru District was reserved for the major data collection, as, has been pointed out, “inclusive schools” are very sparse in Lesotho. Both districts have many schools situated around the town centres, although the town of Mafeteng is much smaller in area and in terms of developments.

The participating teachers ($n = 5$) in the preliminary study were selected from schools around the Mafeteng town centre. Five teachers signed consent forms for participation. However, only three arrived for the interview (the other two excused themselves with less than three hours’ notice, citing unrelated “final minute emergencies”). Consequently, the number of participants in the final interview schedule was put at three. Hancock *et al.* (2007) make it clear that sometimes focus-group interviews have to proceed with fewer participants than expected. Following the preliminary interview, feedback was obtained from the participants and most interview questions appeared to be clear to the participants and were finalised. Furthermore, the researcher was made aware of the importance of considering a short break in the middle of the interview, in order to give participants time to rest.

Other modifications to the interview schedule – as a consequence of the preliminary interview – involved relocating some questions. Question six was relocated to position three, because the responses to questions one and two appeared to link well with those for question six. Furthermore, the participants stated that question 4(a), “Are there opportunities/benefits of inclusive education? If yes, mention them”, appeared to cover question 4(b), “How could they be utilised optimally?” Consequently, question 4(b) was removed and the “explanation” component was attached to 4(a), so as to strengthen it even further: “...If yes, mention *and explain* them.” Then, question 4(a) was renumbered as question five. Also based on participant feedback, question 10(b), “What are your success stories?”, was elaborated on to read: “What are your success stories regarding your teaching of children with different abilities and/or special educational needs in your school?” Finally, the researcher adopted the suggestion of having a short break immediately after question seven. The final interview schedule is attached as Appendix B.

3.2.2 Interviews

It has already been stated in section 3.4, that permission to conduct the research was given: first by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa (UNISA); second by the Ministry of Education in Lesotho; and third by the principals of the secondary schools in the Maseru District of Lesotho (to access any of the teachers in their schools). The participants and the researcher agreed upon the interview venues, dates and times. The second interview was conducted after studying the transcripts from the first one. The interview venues (which happened to be two secondary schools), dates and times were chosen in collaboration with the participants – based on ease of access and their convenience. The first interview was conducted over the weekend (on Sunday), but the second interview was conducted on a Thursday.

Prior to the interview sessions

The researcher arrived at the interview venues an hour before the scheduled time of the interviews. He then arranged the seating for the groups and tested the recording equipment. When the participants came in, he offered them refreshments. Dawson (2006) suggests that the interviewer should do this if he cannot afford to pay the participants. Thereafter, there was time for introductions and some informal conversation between the participants and the interviewer, and among the participants, all aimed at creating rapport. Still conscious of time, the researcher re-explained the purpose of the interviews, and demonstrated how they could benefit the participants. He re-emphasised some of the items which were explained in the consent letters – for example, what would happen to the data, the assurance of confidentiality, freedom to speak in English as well as in Sesotho, and that their names would be omitted from the final copy of the research. There was also an agreement about the ground rules – for example: no interruptions; no use of the real names of people, schools or privately owned places; cell phones were to be switched to silent mode; dominance was to be avoided in the discussions; and nobody could leave early, unless they had a health problem.

The interview sessions

After an agreement was reached to record the interviews, the researcher started the recording device. The interview guide was used to lead the discussion in the direction of the study topic, ensuring that each participant responded to the same question. The group would then discuss that question. Neutrality was key to the researcher throughout the process, and probing questions were used to seek clarification of ambiguous responses. Overall, both interviews proceeded smoothly. The participants for both interviews contributed almost equally in the discussions. This is because the interviewer applied the idea of Dawson (2006) and persuaded those who seemed to be shy, to contribute more. At times the participants wanted to stray from the topic of discussion, and this was ameliorated by repeating the questions, probing, paraphrasing and summarising statements (Dawson, 2006). The researcher also made some notes to record the non-verbal information. The interview sessions lasted 3 hours 40 minutes each, on average. The assumptions for the interviews were that the participants revealed all the information they had concerning their knowledge and experiences of IE, and that their responses and comments during the interviews helped them to reflect and hence grow in terms of their knowledge and understanding of IE.

End of the interviews

At the end of the interviews, the researcher stopped the recording device, thanked the participants, and left them with his phone number in case they wished to follow up on any of the issues they had raised during their discussions. They were once again reminded to seek a published version of the thesis if they wished to have one. Each interview was transcribed, starting a day after the interview was conducted. This meant that the researcher could vividly remember much of the non-verbal information, which was also captured in the field notes. Travel and lunch costs were provided to the research participants.

3.3 Data analysis

It is argued by Henning (2004) that in focus-group interviews, a researcher must strive to understand the way participants phrase their statements in order to pick up symbolic use of language. Clearly, this can easily be done when the researcher and

the participants are from the same culture. Discourse analysis helped the researcher to analyse the non-verbal language of the participants during the focus-group discussions. While one participant was talking, others would nod. Being a Mosotho, when that happened, the researcher knew it meant total agreement with what the person was saying. Consequently, and informed by Litosseliti (2003) that in focus-group interviews data is analysed as it is gathered, the researcher followed up on ideas which did not explicitly reveal consensus, which helped him to generalise about some issues in the final stage of analysis.

Discourse analysis was used again after data collection. First, the researcher prepared a verbatim transcript of the first interview and then translated it into English – as Sesotho was mostly spoken during the interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the process of transcribing interviews is an excellent way for the researcher to become familiar with the data. The researcher read the transcript several times and identified “signs of language” (Henning, 2004) in the data that indicated the way in which the participants were trying to make sense of their experiences in their schools. He looked at instances of the use of specific words and phrases – paying attention to those words and phrases in relation to the research (for example, the use of metaphors). Moreover, the researcher identified some concepts in the transcripts which appeared more frequently, linking them to the importance that participants placed on them. These concepts included the idea of lack of proper teaching aid materials, and also lack of support from the government, other professionals, and parents. The non-verbal information gathered during the interviews was recorded in the field notes and formed part of the discourse analysis at this stage.

Thereafter, categorical indexing (Mason, 2002; Henning, 2004; Maree, 2007; Hancock, *et al.*, 2007) or the step-by-step constant comparison method (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) followed. At this stage, the researcher read the transcript of the first interview again, and in the process wrote down comments and labels in the margins – highlighting the most important or striking aspects of the data, based on the research aim and objectives (Merriam, 1998). Some of the labels resulted from the meanings drawn from what the participants said themselves. For example, some ideas were relating to the participants’ opinions about IE, and their views on the

perceived advantages and disadvantages of IE. For opinions, “op” would be jotted down in the margin, while “ad” and “dis” were used for advantages and disadvantages respectively. Thereafter, similar marginal labels and comments were grouped together to generate sub-themes.

A similar procedure was followed with the second interview – employing both categorical indexing and discourse analysis. At this stage, data collected from the two focus groups were compared with each other and the sub-themes from both interviews were then cross examined against each other, in order to derive themes that were later used to represent the findings of the study. Thereafter, the researcher gave the analysed data to the participants for correction and verification. Conclusions from the data were then “fuzzily” generalised to the total population of teachers in secondary schools in the Maseru District of Lesotho (Miller and Salkind, 2002). A summary of the findings is attached as Appendices C and D.

3.4 Ethical issues

This study involved teachers, and therefore permission and ethical approvals were sought prior to the collection of data. Firstly, ethical approval for the research was sought through the relevant structures at the University of South Africa (UNISA), and through the Research Permissions Sub-Committee (RPSC) of the Senate Research and Innovation Higher Degrees Committee (SRIHDC). Secondly, permission to conduct the research in Lesotho secondary schools was sought from the Lesotho Ministry of Education and then the principals of the schools concerned.

Ethical guidelines were adhered to when selecting participants:

1. *Informed Consent*: Informed by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), Graziano and Raulin (2004), and the University of Nottingham (2013), the researcher provided the participants with information about the research project and requested them to sign a consent form (Appendix A) if they agreed to participate in the study.
2. *Voluntary Participation*: In the consent letters, the participants were informed that they were under no obligation to participate in the research project, and that if they agreed to participate, they also had an opportunity to withdraw at any time

and without a penalty. Hancock *et al.* (2007), Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2001) and Graziano and Raulin (2004), state that respondents have the right to refuse to participate in a research project; thus, their participation should be voluntary.

3. *Confidentiality*: The participants were assured of confidentiality, and that the interviews would be audio-taped. They were also assured that the information obtained from them would be used solely for the research project (which would be published), and that the research supervisor would also have access to the information. They were also informed that their names (and of their schools) would not be used in the published document. The University of Nottingham (2013) and Hancock *et al.* (2007) propose that interviewers must assure the interviewees that their information will be treated with confidentiality.
4. *Access to the Research Paper*: The participants were informed that they would have access the published version of the thesis. As per Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), if assured of the above conditions – participants are more likely to give honest and complete information.

After all permissions were granted, the data collection process began. The first visits to potential participating schools were to meet with the principals and teachers to discuss the research project in general. These visits included discussions about the purpose of the research, participant roles, ethical issues, and methods of data collection. the selection visits followed after this.

3.5 Role of the researcher

Esterberg (2002:12) warns researchers that “[they] need to develop an understanding of how [their] positions shape the kinds of theories [they] create and the kinds of explanations [they] offer”. Thus, researchers must be conscious of their relationships with the informants, as well as with the subject under investigation. Adding to the same point, Gray (2004) states that researchers must approach their research in as neutral a way as possible. Thus, they should be free from bias or preconceived ideas about the phenomenon being investigated. Stated in the words of Madigan (2011:115), “knowledge acquired from the research process is [dependent] upon the interests of the community conducting the research.” The

researcher maintained neutrality by listening to participant stories of their knowledge and experiences about IE, and then analysing and making interpretations based on the information from the participants themselves and with the help of the literature.

Burton and Bartlett (2009) believe that one's position in the research is largely influenced by past personal experiences. Being active in IE, it was possible that the researcher could influence the data – such that it would favour his position. In order to counteract this potential development, during data collection the researcher distanced himself as much as possible from this concept – in order to view inclusion fairly from the positions of the informants. In the same manner, relationships with the informants were strictly professional. The sampling process omitted the researcher's school and its closest neighbours, to ensure there were no personal relationships with informants – except at a professional level.

3.6 Trustworthiness

The issues of validity and reliability relating specifically to the method of data collection selected, were discussed in previous sections. Validity is defined as:

“... a matter of being able to offer as sound a representation of the field of study as the research methods allow ...” (Edwards, 2001:124);

“...the degree to which scientific explanations or phenomena match the realities of the world” (Makhado, 2002:116).

Thus, validity in qualitative research is understood to refer to credibility and is determined by the honesty and accuracy of the data gathered. However, no research can ever be entirely valid (Robson, 2002; Makhado, 2002) – as reality is multidimensional, ever-changing, and therefore subjective.

On the other hand, reliability is understood to refer to the extent or degree to which the findings of a particular study can be replicated. Thus, reliability relates to the possibility of another researcher conducting research under the same conditions (with similar research tools and in the same context), and also obtaining the same results (Gray, 2004; Makhado, 2002; Robson, 2002; Sethosa, 2001). Reliability in

qualitative research (particularly through the interpretive approach) is difficult to achieve – since people are culturally heterogeneous and so respond differently in different situations and at different times. Consequently, it is argued that with qualitative research, reliability refers to the dependability of results or whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Gray, 2004; Robson, 2002).

According to Madigan (2011), an equivalent measure to reliability and validity is the trustworthiness criterion, which is measured by means such as peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement with potential sources of information. The researcher spent some time with the teachers in the selected schools explaining the purposes and benefits of the research to them. This was also done just before the interview processes. The intention was to build a good relationship and trust with the participants. However, this was also done with circumspection, as the approach can also have some disadvantages – such as influencing participants' points of view in relation to the topic of discussion, and hence their responses. Thus, the researcher remained objective throughout the exercise.

According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2001), recording precise, almost literal and detailed descriptions of people and situations, also enhances validity. This was done in this study by using a voice recorder to record the interviews and to take field notes. The researcher kept the original interview transcripts and tape recordings in order to regularly check and refer to their content during the interpretation and analysis stages. This helped to reduce the risk of researcher bias – which is the reporting of the researcher's views rather than those of participants, and which is a concern in interpretive research (Robson, 2002). Moreover, excerpts from the participants' discussions were used to make the findings clear – hence assuring confirmability, which is referred to as the extent to which findings are free from bias (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Sandelowski, 1993). An application of discourse analysis – even during data-collection – is thought to have helped the researcher record exactly the ideas of the informants, and not his assumptions. Furthermore, although it is not very common in qualitative research, the researcher formulated hypotheses for the study in order to provide a platform to work from and to establish the true value of the study, its applicability, consistency and neutrality (Maguvhe, 2005). For the same

reason, the researcher gave the analysed data to the participants for correction and verification.

Providing an audit trail enhances the trustworthiness of research (Gray, 2004). Records of appointments and field notes were maintained for this purpose. The researcher has also used different sources of information (journals, books, dissertations, theses and other relevant documents) to enhance the credibility of his interpretations. Moreover, the fact that Sesotho was spoken during the interviews could have minimised communication barriers and encouraged participants to express themselves freely in their mother tongue – probably eliminating the intimidation associated with exclusively using a foreign language. Hence, it is assumed they provided information that could be relied upon. In addition, the researcher is a secondary school teacher himself, and so this approach could have eliminated perceived superiority, so inspiring the participants to want to talk to him even more. However, the researcher was mindful of the potential that responses could have been shaped by his professional relationship with the research participants (Maree, 2007) – considering that being his colleagues the participants might think that stating their school-based problems to him could result in helpful advice.

For the purpose of enabling transferability, the researcher provided details of the context of the study, and how data were collected and processed. It is argued that this enables other people to make comparisons with their own contexts. Transferability is regarded as the degree to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 1998).

3.7 Chapter three summary

In this chapter, it was demonstrated that the research followed an interpretivist paradigm and was qualitative. It has been shown that the qualitative research model employed was the case study, using semi-structured interviews. The participating teachers were selected from a population of 12 schools that currently (or previously) had some learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Two focus groups were formed: one comprising six teachers from urban regions and the other six

teachers from rural areas of the Maseru District. The choice of participating teachers relied upon them having taught a class including children with disabilities and/or special educational needs – for a minimum of two years.

The researcher was granted permission to conduct the research from the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa (UNISA), Lesotho's Ministry of Education, the principals of the secondary schools in the Maseru District of Lesotho, and also the teachers who participated in the group discussions. Among other things, the participants were assured of confidentiality and were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. The interview venues were agreed upon by the researcher and the participants. The interviews went according to plan and the collected data was analysed in two stages (after the first interview and after the second interview) using categorical indexing and discourse analysis.

The analysis and interpretation of data follows in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Chapter objectives

In chapter three, the research design and methodology used in the research were delineated. This included discussions about the selection of participants, how data were analysed, ethical considerations, as well as the measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of this study. This chapter, however, presents the findings of this study. Data analysis and interpretation processes were guided by the literature review in chapter two and Bourdieu's (1983-1999) three concepts of habitus, field and capital. Habitus was conceptualised as teacher practices, experiences and opinions in relation to their understanding of IE. Capital (economic and cultural) was conceptualised as teacher professional skills and knowledge of IE, along with the necessary resources and facilities that were vital to enable teachers to be part of their network of schools and education system. Lastly, field was conceptualised as referring to the school's settings and their structures that are part of the structure of the education system network – of which teachers are a part (section 2.1). Verbatim transcripts are provided as Appendix C and the translated transcripts as Appendix D. Data collection sought to bring answers to the following research questions:

How do teachers in Lesotho secondary schools conceptualise IE?

- How do(es) their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack thereof) translate into their teaching approaches?
- To what degree is/are their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack thereof) similar or different?
- How do(es) their conceptualisation(s) of this concept relate to the literature on this subject?

Two focus-group interviews were conducted, tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. The verbatim transcripts were translated into English and given to the participants for correction and verification. Subsequently, the transcripts were read several times in order to determine the context of potential themes and sub-themes in relation to the research aim (Mason, 2002; Henning, 2004; Maree, 2007; Hancock

et al., 2007; Creswell, 2007; Henning, Van Rensburg, and Smit, 2004). Finally, eight codes were identified from the data. As argued by Wiersman and Jurs (2009), the process of categorising the information helps researchers with content analysis and interpretation. It is worth mentioning that with a few exceptions (for example the issue of “anti-educational” communities), the ideas did not differ much between the two focus groups, and so the data were combined and coded together. The recurring eight codes drawn from the data were:

1. Teachers’ theoretical understanding of IE.
2. Factors affecting teachers’ understanding of disability and IE.
3. Teachers’ opinions about IE.
4. Teachers’ experiences and challenges in terms of implementing IE.
5. Teachers’ adaptations in implementing IE.
6. Other key areas involving IE.
7. Benefits of IE.
8. Disadvantages of IE.

In order to address the questions and the objectives of this study, these codes are discussed below as sub-headings, and were interpreted in order to make them understandable to the reader (Patton, 2002). Lastly, the codes were discussed under seven major themes (section 4.9). Verbatim quotes were indented in single line spacing, and put in quotation marks. The participants were given code identities to promote anonymity: P1–P6 implied participating teachers numbered one to six. The letters ‘U’ and ‘R’ were inserted next to the numbers in order to distinguish between urban and rural focus groups. For example, P1U implied participant number one from the urban group.

4.1 Teachers’ theoretical understanding of IE

From your perspective, what is meant by an inclusive education?

This section explored teachers’ habitus in terms of their thinking, beliefs, values and dispositions – in relation to inclusion in the context of their schools and the context of the secondary school education system in Lesotho (their field). As already argued under section 2.2, the controversy about IE and the variations in its definition could

simply suggest that the concept is contextual. As per The Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE) (2002), Sharma and Deppeler (2005), Miles (2005), and McConkey and Bradly (2007), IE means that all children, including those with disabilities or difficulties, are served primarily in the general education setting, under the responsibility of a regular classroom teacher. Other definitions, for example that of Ainscow and Booth (2002:7), stress the importance of participation in an inclusive setting: “[Inclusion means] ... increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from ... local schools.” The key ideas of these definitions were reflected in the participant discussions about what they understood by the term IE:

“Is that type of education that accommodates learners of different types, for example you may find that there are these students who have talents, ... some are blind and some are deaf. So, we have to bring them to school ... so that they ... feel that they are still needed by others.” (P1R)

“I can say that inclusive education is this type of education where the children with or without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classroom.” (P3R)

“Inclusive education ka khopolo ea ka ke bona e ka ke thuto e kenyeletsang batho ho sa tsotellehe maemo a bona a mmele. E kaba batho ba nang le likhaello kapa ba sena tsona ... E kaba motho ea nang le bokooa kapa a sena bona. Ke nahana hore ke thuto e kenyeletsang batho bohle.” [In my opinion, it is the type of education that accommodates all, irrespective of an individual's bodily conditions, needs or deficiencies. Some may even have disabilities. It is an education for all.] (P1U)

The above comments implied that the teachers understood IE to imply education for all (EFA). This corroborates Hodgkinson's (2006) quantitative study which uncovered that 40% of respondents perceived IE to mean EFA. In fact, EFA and IE appear to be inextricably linked. UNESCO (1994, 2001) indicates that it is only through IE that the EFA objective can be realised: “... regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of ... building an inclusive society, and achieving an education for all” (UNESCO, 1994:9).

As opposed to an integrated education system, IE calls for transformation in the schools so that they respond to individual learner's needs. When inclusion fails, the education system is seen as a problem, and not the child. The interviewees (also

referred to as the participants, participating teachers, or simply teachers) seemed clear about the fact that inclusion required their schools to “accommodate” all the different types of learners. Accommodation implied schools were to re-adjust (through structural and curricular modifications) in order to meet the needs of different types of learners, and not vice versa. In other words, in line with most IE scholars [for example Miles (2005), Sharma and Deppeler (2005), Stubbs (2002) and Ainscow and Booth (2002)], the teachers opined that people should emphasise changing professional attitudes and the environment of their schools (thus, their capital, in Bourdieu’s context) – rather than force children with disabilities and/or special educational needs to fit into existing mainstream classrooms. The participants even proposed some structural and curricular changes within their schools that would enable inclusion to thrive:

“Ke nahana hore e kenyeletsa le hore na mohlomong li-classroom li designnoe joang ho accommodata bana bohle ... le subject ka bo eona hore na e accommodata bana bohle.” [I think it involves designing classrooms and subject lessons, such that they can accommodate all types of learners.] (P5U)

“Le curriculum e ntse e ba cateretse ka tsela e tsoanang.” [Even the curriculum must cater for all types of learners.] (P2U)

“Mus o lokela hore o bone hore o lokisa mabala for batho banang le disabilities.” [Our government must ensure that the playing grounds are suitable for people with disabilities.] (P2R)

At the time, the interviewees could not specify the type of curricular modifications they envisaged. Later in their discussions it seemed they meant creating opportunities for differentiated assessment of learners, making necessary adjustments in the time for classroom instruction, and in curriculum content, in order to enable a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning and to cater for different types of learners (for example learners with visual impairment).

The teachers understood IE to imply the promotion of participation of all learners in their schools. In essence, participation in school activities is a very important ingredient of IE. Ainscow and Booth (2002) view inclusion as the processes of increasing the participation of students in schools. UNESCO (2005) concurs, claiming that inclusion addresses and responds to the diversity of needs of all

learners, by increasing their participation in learning. Similarly, Florian (2005:32) understands inclusion to refer to "... the opportunity for persons with [disabilities] to participate fully in all of the educational ... activities that typify everyday society." For Florian (2005), the opportunity to participate implies active involvement and choice – as opposed to the passive receipt of a pattern or condition that has been made available.

Thus, participation refers to children with disabilities learning alongside other children in mainstream schools, and collaborating with them in shared learning experiences. It calls for active engagement with learning and taking part in discussions around how education is experienced. Also pointing to the importance of participation in inclusive schools, Koster, Nakken, Pijl and Van Houten (2009:135) refer to social participation as "the presence of positive contact/interaction between children [with disabilities] and their classmates; acceptance of them by their classmates; social relationships/friendships between them and their classmates and the pupils' perception that they are accepted by their classmates." In short, "... it is about being recognised, accepted and valued for oneself" (Ainscow and Booth, 2002:7). In Bourdieu's (1990) context, learner disengagement (lack of participation) may be a result of schools' perpetuation or reproduction of oppression and oppressive practices, through inequitable power relations which contribute to "othering" of certain social groups at the expense of providing privilege to others (Hooks, 2003).

SCF (2002) proposes child-to-child and children with disabilities' groups, as two approaches through which participation of children with disabilities in mainstream schools could be improved. As per the author, children have played a big role in challenging negative attitudes in their communities in relation to disability, pushing wheelchairs for children with physical challenges to and from school, writing notes for those with visual impairment, teaching others with disabilities in their homes, identifying children who are excluded from school, and encouraging their parents to take them to school. When explaining the important role that children without disabilities play in enhancing inclusion within their schools, the teachers commented as follows:

“Hape taba eno ea ho ba rutella ka classeng e le ‘ngoe le ba senang disability e ka thusa ka hore ba senang mathata lithutong ba thuse ba liehang ho utloisisa.” [Teaching children with and without disabilities together, in the same classroom, enables fast learners to assist slow learners.] (P6R)

“... u tla fumana hore bana bantseng ba bona hantle ba thusa bana ba sa boneng, ba ea ba balla libuka le linotes classeng e be bona ha ba khone ho lingola ka nako eno, ba salla morao.” [You find that those who can see, help those with visual impairment by dictating notes and textbooks to them – as those with visual impairment usually cannot keep up with the teaching pace in class.] (P6U)

The benefits of IE were discussed in depth in section 4.7. Advocates of IE [for example Miles (2005), Sharma and Deppeler (2005) and Stubbs (2002)] argue that disability may not be an educational problem, but rather a societal issue. The authors attest that children with physical disabilities may be disabled by other people’s attitudes and inaccessible schools (field barriers), but their educational needs may in no way be ‘special’. The participants acknowledged that IE does not focus solely on children with disabilities but also on those without physical challenges – but with special educational needs. The participants mentioned that IE implied the “... enrolment of learners with different learning abilities under one roof” (P2R). It was also revealed that some children with disabilities might not have special educational needs:

“Le nna ke nahana hore it is a good idea hore ba kenele classeng e le ‘ngoe because disability is not inability. Bana bano le bona ba ntse ba le capable ho etsa lintho tse ka etsuoang ke babang.” [I also think it is a good idea that children with disabilities are taught in the regular classroom together with their normal peers, because disability is not inability; some children with disabilities are capable of doing everything that others do.] (P4R)

The above comment implies that some children with disabilities may not have cognitive challenges. Although this issue of disability not necessarily signifying special educational needs appeared only later in the urban group’s discussions – this group also seemed extremely supportive of this issue. One of them stated that: “Some of them (children with disabilities) even learn to put aside their disabilities, because even though they are disabled on the body, they are not in the mind” (P5U). This argument also confirms the idea that disability may not be an educational problem – especially when other challenges relating to inclusion have been addressed. However, the phrase “enrolment of learners with different learning

abilities under one roof” also indicates that the teachers could not clearly differentiate between inclusion and integration. Seemingly, the statement focused merely on school attendance. It is however argued that the Integrated Education system focuses on children with disabilities going to mainstream schools (that is, the focus is on attendance rates), while Inclusive Education is about all children (including those with disabilities) learning effectively once they are in mainstream schools (that is, the focus is on quality of learning) (Florian, 2005). Thus, the enrolment of different types of learners in mainstream schools, which are not re-adjusted to meet their individual needs, is pure integration. Under this paradigm the focus is social aspects of life, rather than academic excellence. Hence the following statements were made:

“I think also bana banang le physical disability ba tlameha hore ba rutoe mmoho le bana babang ba normal, ba nang le ntho e ‘ngoe le e ‘ngoe hore ba tsebe ho amohelana. Ba ikutloe le bona e ntse e le part ea sechaba sa Basotho.” [I think that children with disabilities should learn alongside their normal peers, so that they can accept each other as Basotho children.] (P3R)

An IE philosophy opposes the traditional practice of placing children with disabilities away from their homes and families to attend special schools (SCF, 2002). The argument is that children with disabilities should stay with their families and communities, so that they can grow in the same way as others without disabilities. This idea seemed to be of utmost importance to the rural group compared to the urban group. It was noted on several occasions in the rural group’s discussions – for example in their discussions about how they had come to know about IE, and again when they discussed the disadvantages of IE, and also very strongly in their discussions about the key issues they regarded as vital to be included in an inclusion policy. Considering the long distances that learners have to walk to schools and the remoteness of most villages in rural Lesotho, it is reasonable that these teachers put so much emphasis on this issue. The rural parts of Lesotho have fewer and more widely distributed secondary schools (Ntho, 2013). Students have to travel very long distances to schools, and often crossing rivers with no bridges. The teachers argued that this made it almost impossible for learners with mobility impairment to attend school. Consequently, the teachers suggested boarding houses within their schools for children with mobility impairment. Thus, these children would be kept in schools in order to ease their school attendance:

“Mohlala ke hore u bone hore wheelchair e ke ke ea kena sekolong sa ka. Ha ntlo e joalo e le teng, ngoana o tla sokoloa ho fihla sekolong, empa hang ha a fihla sekolong mathata a hae a tla fela.” [You have seen that someone using a wheelchair cannot reach my school. Having such a hostel for them will make their life easier once they have been helped to get to the schools.] (P1R).

The idea of erecting boarding houses for learners with mobility impairment surfaced indirectly in the urban group’s discussions about the disadvantages of IE. They argued that some things could not be improvised such as the long distances that learners had to travel to some schools – which was considered to be a major challenge mostly to those who used wheelchairs for mobility: “*Likolo tseling li hole haholo hore ngoana a filhe ho sona a tsamea ka wheelchair*. [Some schools are too far to be reached by children using wheelchairs]” (P2U). One teacher in the group stated that his school was located nearer to a home for children with disabilities, in order to ease their school attendance.

The teachers strongly proposed that children with severe disabilities and/or special educational needs be placed in special schools. They argued that only special schools had resources (institutional and objectified cultural capital) to address their needs. A typical extract about this idea is as follows:

“Joale, mathata ao re eng re kopane le ona, hona le bana banang le severe needs hoo o bonang hore ba se ba hloka special skills, haholo banang le mental retardation – bothata ba boko. Ke bona bao o tla bona hore ba hloka special schools. Empa haele babang, mohlala handicap, le tseling kaofela, nna kere ba rutoe le babang...” [Sometimes we encounter challenges of children with severe needs, for example those with mental retardation who require specially skilled teachers in order to learn. Such children should be taken to special schools. As for those with mild handicaps, they can be taught in our mainstream schools.] (P2U)

The above extract shows that IE was also considered to refer to mainstream schools’ enrolment of children with mild disabilities and/or special educational needs. One teacher from the urban group initially believed that children with disabilities were to be placed in special schools, irrespective of the severity of their disabilities. When responding to the question of whether it was a good idea that in some mainstream schools children with disabilities and/or special educational needs were taught in the regular classroom together with their normal peers, the teacher stated: “I don’t think it is a good idea ... So, I suggest that ... *ba be le a special school sa bona moo*

baithutelang teng ba le bang” [they should be taken to the special schools] (P4U). Nonetheless, his group mates convinced him that only those with severe disabilities should be taken to special schools. They stated that with proper support education and awareness raising, those with mild disabilities could be accommodated in mainstream schools:

“I think it is a good idea hore ba kenele classeng le bana babang. Se kampang sa etsahala ke hore bana bano bao re nkang ba le normal, ba lokisoe ka lihloohong hore ba tsebe hore ho na le batho ba joalo.” [I think it is a good idea that they learn alongside normal peers in mainstream schools. What we need to do is to help the normal ones to understand them.] (P6U)

When probed about their thoughts regarding the resources in the special schools being taken to their mainstream schools, the teachers seemed supportive of the idea. However, they expressed concern over the fiscal feasibility of resourcing a large number of mainstream schools for full inclusion. One teacher from the rural group conveyed that:

“Ke taba e ntle, empa ha e bobebe ho etsahala. U tlo fumana hore likolo tsohle ha lina fascilities tse joalo. Le ha u le principal, joale u kopa mmuso ho thusa sekolo sa hao ka tsona, ho ke ke hoa etsahala hore u li fumane.” [The idea of taking resources to our schools is good, but not practical. Almost all mainstream schools lack such resources. As a principal, you may request them from the Ministry of Education, but you will never get them.] (P2R)

O'Neill, Bourke and Kearney (2009) also revealed that that special education ideology was very dominant in the thinking, policy and practice of many educators. Kavale (2000) warns that children with severe cognitive disabilities and those with severe behavioural disorders are more likely to be harmed than helped by putting them in inclusive schools, because teachers do not usually have highly specialised training to deal with their needs.

The teachers revealed that IE started only recently in Lesotho, which could account for some of them not knowing much about it:

“... ke ee ke bone hangata liclass khale koana hona le tse litupu li telele fela empa ke ee ke bone hore morao tjena moo inclusive education e leng teng ho na le moo ho hluoang le teng, ntle le liteps hona le mocha o senang liteps e le hore ba tsamaeang ka liwheelchair batle ba khone ho kena ka classeng eno.”

[In the past, classrooms used to have long stairs, but I have realised that recently, schools that practice inclusive education have ramps for wheelchair users to access classrooms.] (P1U)

The participants showed that, at times, people with disabilities were labelled by their impairments:

“Nkile ka bona boemo ba motho ea neng a hloka leoto le leng. Joale, batho baneng ba mohlomphe ba fokola ka palo. Bane ba mobitsa (lebitso le amahanang le bokooa ba hae). Ba ne ba morehile lebitso leo hoba ha a tsamea o ne a qhoma.” [I have seen a case where a leg amputee learner was called a name relating to his condition. Only a few people in the school respected him.] (P3U)

“Pele ke ea kholoa motho e mong le e mong boinoseng ba hae o ne a tseba ha ba bitsoa ka mabitso a khethollang a kang lihole, lifofu, empa hamorao tjena ha ho sana lipuo tse joalo hangata.” [Everybody will remember that in the past, people with disabilities were given discriminatory names, for example the blind, but recently things have improved.] (P1U)

The above comments indicate that culture and language (which hold names for impairments) defined the teachers’ understanding of disability. Thus the participants’ habitus, linked to their embodied cultural capital (when names were given to the losses of body organs or the malfunction thereof) described their understanding of disability (Hurtado, 2010).

The next section discusses the factors that appeared to have influenced the teachers’ understanding of disability and IE.

4.2 Factors influencing teachers’ understanding of disability and inclusive education

How have you come to know about it?

It appeared that the teachers’ theoretical understanding of disability and IE had a bearing in their habitus (history of individual teachers, their personal dispositions, influence of systematic structures and institutions, the socio-cultural and political context), their capital (educational and cultural knowledge base and experiences), and their field (physical structures, school and national policy on education) (Eizadirad, 2016). The data reflected this by showing that the teachers’

understanding of disability and IE was influenced by their culture, the awareness raising campaigns, their schooling exposure, and, to a lesser extent, their education policy.

4.2.1 Culture

It is argued that one's habitus can be shaped or influenced by embodied cultural capital, and by personal experiences within the field: "Embodied cultural capital consists of both the deliberately and passively acquired properties of one's self from the family through socialization of culture and traditions over time, and impresses itself on one's habitus" (Bourdieu, 1990:114). Culturally, disability has been perceived negatively by the Basotho (section 1.1). It has been associated *inter alia* with pregnant women's unfaithfulness, their contact with people with disabilities, their eating too much protein, witchcraft, evil spirits, and lack of proper attention to ancestral spirits (Khatleli *et al.*, 1995). Disability was also considered to be contagious, and consequently, parents used to discourage their normal children from mingling with disabled children. Considering that people's habitus informs them about their actions (Bordieu, 1990), this perception about disability could have encouraged families with children with disabilities to keep them away from public recognition and exposure. In their discussions, the teachers confirmed Basotho's history of negativity towards disability. As an example, one of them said that:

"Ke bua ka albinos. Ke ne ke utloa e le batho bao ka nako e 'ngoe ba khesehang sechabeng ... Bothata e ne eba ha re ea mokutong, hoba u ne u tla utloa ho ntse ho thoe "ha ke batle motho oa lesofe a kute pele ho bana baka" [I am talking about the albinos. They were disliked within our communities. They were even denied rights to partake in certain cultural activities such as participation in activities that are performed after burying the deceased.] (P1R)

It is worth mentioning that persons with albinism are usually as healthy as the rest of the population, with growth and development occurring as normal; however, they can be classified as disabled because of the associated visual impairment (Thuku, 2011). It could have not been necessary for the Basotho to hide their children with albinism because they did not require much (or any) assistance from other people. Nevertheless, a lack of understanding of albinism and African myths about the condition (Thuku, 2011) could have perpetuated negativity towards people living with

albinism. Thuku (2011) indicates that one of the African myths and misconceptions about albinism is that the condition is contagious. Clearly, this would influence parents in terms of keeping their children away from those living with albinism. However, the teachers noted some improvements in Basotho perceptions of other types of disabilities. The urban teachers stated that at childhood stage, their parents taught them to communicate with those with hearing impairments by using bodily gestures.

O'Brien (2000) argues that successful inclusion lies inside the teacher's habitus. Croll and Moses (2000) concur, claiming that some mainstream school teachers have considerable reservations about the feasibility of inclusion in reality. According to these authors, the reservations are related (among other things) to the types and severity of student difficulties and the teachers' own beliefs about the students. An in-depth analysis of the data revealed some instances of teacher pessimism about some types of disabilities. For example, looking agitated, one teacher remarked:

“... interaction [between] those who are normal and those with disabilities, sometimes those who are normal may get disgusted. Imagine sharing a desk with a person who is always salivating, it is disgusting and you are not able to learn well. The person is always salivating and the saliva even falls onto the desk.” (P4U)

Eizadirad (2016) notes that people's habitus is subject to modification due to exposure to new ideas. Similarly, Hooks (2003:35) states that: “through the cultivation of awareness, through the decolonization of our minds, we have the tools to break with the dominator model of human social engagement and the will to imagine new and different ways” Nonetheless, despite influences from international conventions challenging negative attitudes and beliefs about disability, this negativity seemed not to be completely eradicated in Lesotho.

4.2.2 Awareness programmes

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) (established in 1989) is an umbrella body of four organisations dealing with disability in Lesotho. The Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons (LSMHP) was formed in 1992. These NGOs aimed to represent the rights and needs of children

and adults with different types of disabilities. They advocated the promotion of the rights of people with disabilities – providing training, material and emotional support to them and representing their needs to government, development partners and the wider community (LSMHP, 2001; LANFOD, 2013).

Awareness-raising campaigns about the potential of people with disabilities to succeed in academic education, appears to have played a big role in participant knowledge of IE. The impacts of such campaigns were witnessed by the teachers – as illustrated in their statements, such as: *“Nna ke tsebile ha ho ntse ho etsoa taba ena ea awareness [raising] ka batho banang le bokooa.”* [I have known about IE because of awareness-raising campaigns about people with disabilities] (P1U).

Stubbs (2008) maintains that this advocacy usually focuses on: (1) raising awareness about the rights of people with disabilities to IE; (2) insisting that sufficient and appropriate support and resources are needed for inclusion; (3) advocating accessible environments and access to the curriculum through alternative and augmentative forms of communication (e.g. Braille, sign language, alternative scripts); (4) acting as role models and advocating the participation of people with disabilities in education at all levels (e.g. as teachers, managers, policy-makers); and (5) raising awareness of the situation of people with hearing impairments as a linguistic community, and making a strong case for such adults and people who know sign language to become teachers of children with hearing impairments (Stubbs, 2008). Nonetheless, Stubbs (2008) however points out a challenge regarding disability advocacy groups in relation to their perception of IE as solely a disability issue – rather than as a characteristic that should define quality education for all children with and without disabilities.

4.2.3 Policy on education

In 1989, the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) drafted a policy on special education. The 1989 policy statement advocated (among other things) the integration of people with disabilities into the mainstream school system. Thus, it called for moving learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs from special schools to mainstream schools – as special schools were perceived to

promote segregation (MOET, 1989). The teachers seemed not to know much about this policy, but it was interesting to hear some of the teachers from the rural group mentioning that it was a contributory factor to their knowledge of IE. When responding to the question on how they had gained knowledge of IE, one teacher replied as follows:

“Nna ke sare ke hopola hore e teng policing tsa education tsa Lesotho. Ho thoe bana bohle, ho sa tsotellehe hore ngoana o na le disability e fe, ba lokela ho rutoa mmoho ka sehlopheng se le seng.” [I think it is found in Lesotho’s education policy. The policy calls for all children to be taught together in the same classroom regardless of individual’s types of disabilities.] (P2R)

Although all the teachers in the rural group shared this idea, none could explain it further when probed. It appeared that the teachers had never actually read the policy document. In Bourdieu’s (1990) context, the policy on IE is represented as a form of symbolic capital, which teachers have to implement. Teachers’ lack of clear knowledge of this policy was regarded as a deficiency in their symbolic capital, which (see Grenfell, 2009), had the potential to hinder IE-related developments in their schools. Hence, Fraser’s (2005) proposal that IE policies be put in place at the school level to guide the implementation of inclusion.

4.2.4 Schooling exposure

The teachers stated that they learned about IE (their symbolic capital) in their schools as learners and teachers. Some teachers experienced it as primary school learners, although they could not label it as IE at that time. Some teachers claimed they experienced it for the first time at their work places, but those who had obtained their tertiary qualifications from the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) claimed to have learned about it in the special education module offered at this college. Nonetheless, the latter group criticised the special education module for lacking a practical component – thereby rendering them ill-prepared to face challenges in their field. This concern was stated as follows:

“[The module] is just guiding us on basics ... We do no practical part of the subject. When you go to work, you find a different situation to the one you expected.]” (P4U)

Several scholars have illustrated the importance of including a practical component in special education training. These include Engelbrecht (2006), Haihambo (2010) and Kuyini and Mangope (2011). Lewis and Bagree (2013) note that teacher training on inclusion has to offer a balance of theoretical and practice-based learning. Thus, teachers (trainee teachers and experienced ones) need to learn about the concept of IE, but also need many opportunities to observe and implement the theories in practice – ideally with support from experienced colleagues or mentors. Lewis and Bagree (2013) state that practice-based teacher training has to be relevant to the local context and culture, and needs to be a well-managed process, so that teachers or trainee teachers are not overwhelmed.

Teacher training institutions are advised to intensify their efforts to equip trainee teachers with skills to implement IE. Lewis and Bagree (2013:13) assert that it is not sufficient for these institutions to offer trainee teachers only “one-off or stand-alone” courses on IE. The one-off courses are often characterised by being optional and sometimes do not contribute to the trainee teacher’s final grades – thus offering the trainees little incentive to take the courses. Rather, there needs to be “a mixture of specific courses that focus on inclusive education, and a concerted effort to ‘embed’ inclusive education principles into all teacher training courses and activities” (Lewis and Bagree, 2013:14). The teachers seemed to value special education courses, as they suggested that tertiary institutions make special education a second major subject for teacher trainees – in order to provide secondary schools with well-equipped teachers who can address learners’ diverse needs:

“[It must be a second major subject] because, tichere e nang le major oa mathematics le physics e tseba feela ho ruta bana ba normal, e seng ba sa utloeng litsebeng kapa ba sa boneng mahlong.” [Special education must be a second major subject for teacher trainees, because someone who is trained to teach mathematics and physics will be able to teach only the normal children, and not those with disabilities.] (P2R)

The participants believed that their government was capable of influencing tertiary institutions to make special education a second major subject for trainee teachers. Probing this issue further, it came out that the participants believed that despite being autonomous, the teacher training institutions could be persuaded by government to comply with the call to intensify special education training.

4.3 Teacher opinions about IE

In some mainstream schools children with disabilities and/or special educational needs are taught in the regular classroom together with their “normal” peers. Do you think this is a good idea? Why?

What effect(s) do you think the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs in mainstream schools may have on:

- (a) The children with disabilities themselves (e.g. their academic achievement, interaction with their non-disabled peers etc)?*
- (b) Other children in the class (e.g. their academic achievement, responses towards them, and any other way)?*
- (c) The school’s image (e.g. school’s yearly appraisal by the Ministry of Education, parents’ views of the school etc)?*

It was argued in section 2.8 that an opinion is a component of an attitude. The findings of this study reflected mostly the cognitive component of attitude, and thus the teachers’ opinions and views on IE in the context of their field (De Boer *et al.*, 2011). As a consequence, the term “opinions” was found to be more appropriate to this study than the broader term “attitudes” – in terms of depicting how the teachers viewed IE and what they thought could be done to enhance its implementation in their schools. It is captured in the SCF’s (2002) statement, that the attitudinal barrier to inclusion is so great that the level of resourcing becomes meaningless. Research shows that most educators hold negative attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning (learners with special educational needs). Some of the excuses provided by educators have included: inadequate skills, lack of confidence, fear, taboo, lack of knowledge about disability, lack of resources and inadequate planning time (Gross, 2002; SCF, 2002; Agbenyega, 2007; Bothma, Gravett and Swart, 2000). Negative attitudes towards IE are considered detrimental to its implementation:

“If mainstream teachers do not accept the education of these students [those with disabilities and/or special educational needs] as an integral part of their job, they will try to ensure that someone else (often the special educational needs teacher) takes responsibility for these students and will organise covert segregation in the school” (Dapudong, 2014:1).

The participants in both focus groups seemed to welcome the idea of inclusion. They listed the many benefits that this arrangement may bring to children with and without disabilities and to their communities. For example, one participant acknowledged a wealth of knowledge and skills that people with disabilities may contribute to class: “you will find that we learn a lot from people with disabilities. You find that even ourselves we [tend to] forget about their disabilities because there is a lot of input we get from them” (P5U).

Research reveals teachers’ mixed opinions about IE (e.g. Burke and Sutherland, 2004; Mapea, 2006; Jimenez and Graf, 2008; Johnson, 2001). Sikes, Lawson and Parker (2007) call such mixed opinions the “yes, buts of inclusion”. The participants in the current study also exhibited the “yes buts ...” opinions relating to inclusion. They considered IE to be a good idea, but that it was difficult to implement due to capital constraints. These constraints included lack of skills, lack of information about disability, and lack of resources (fiscal, human and material). Some teachers in the urban group remarked:

“... I think it is a good idea hore ba kenele classeng le bana babang. Se kampang sa etsahala ke hore bana bano bao re nkang ba le normal, ba lokisoe ka lihloohong hore ba tsebe hore ho na le batho ba joalo.” [I think it is a good idea that they learn together with others in the same classroom. However, those without disabilities must be taught about the existence of such people.] (P6U)

“Taba ena ka kotloloho ha u e sheba e kaba le litholoana tse ntle. Fela moo e phelang teng ea eba thata.” [The inclusion idea can bear good fruits. But it is difficult to put this into practice.] (P3U)

Responding to the question about whether it was possible and necessary to accommodate all types of disabilities and/or special educational needs in their schools, the participants from the rural group boldly replied that: “it is necessary, but not possible in our case” (P5R). The other “buts” of inclusion were summarised as:

- It may be expensive with regard to hiring support teachers.
- It may promote employment based on sympathy rather than the criterion of required skills.

- It may promote bias, as teachers may have a soft spot for those with disabilities.
- It may promote dependency; thus, mainstream school support may result in dependency.

There were instances when purely negative opinions about inclusion also reflected in focus-group discussions. When teachers made the following remarks, facial expressions and voice tones clearly reflected their negative opinions about IE: "... it is disgusting and you are not able to learn well. The person is always salivating and the saliva even falls onto the desk" (P4U); "... *E ba parasites.*" [They become parasites]" (P4R). Perhaps, considering that IE remains a highly contested concept (section 2.2), it is unsurprising that teachers had contradictory opinions about it.

4.4 Teachers' experiences and challenges in relation to IE implementation

Is it: (i) possible, and (ii) necessary to accommodate all types of disabilities and/or special educational needs in your school? Explain your answer.

What kind of: (a) skills, and (b) support or facilities do you think a teacher may need in order to conduct an inclusive class?

What can you say about the suitability of the current secondary school curriculum (syllabus) content in relation to the education of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs?

Drawing from Klibthong (2012) and Houston (2002), teachers' experiences and thoughts have a bearing in their habitus. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) indicate that teacher experiences in implementing IE can serve as a "corner stone" for developing sustainable improvement strategies. The teachers revealed some crucial experiences and challenges in their endeavours to implement inclusion in their schools. These were considered crucial, because they appeared to influence the success of inclusion in their schools or the failure thereof. These were grouped into three categories: those related to profiles of children with disabilities in relation to mainstream schooling; those related to the teaching strategies in the schools under

investigation; and those related to MOET's contributions to IE implementation in Lesotho secondary schools.

4.4.1 Findings related to profiles of children with disabilities in relation to mainstream schooling

There is an alarming consensus among scholars about the link between disability and poverty (e.g. Stubbs, 2002, 2008; DFID, 2010). However, according to DFID (2010:3): "Education gives children with disabilities skills to allow them to become positive role models and [to] join the employment market, thereby helping to prevent poverty." The interviewees from the rural group corroborated this statement through their observations that children with disabilities often came from impoverished families: "... *hangata bana banang le disabilities ba tlabe ba tloha malapeng a sotlehileng*" [In most cases, children with disabilities come from impoverished families] (P1R).

Perhaps poverty is one of the exclusionary factors in Lesotho secondary education. In Lesotho, education is not free at secondary level [see section 1.1 (ii)]. This indicates that parental economic cultural capital could also be a limiting factor for the enrolment of children with disabilities into secondary schools. The problem of poverty has been compounded by the challenge of the lack of guardians who could work closely with teachers to nurture children with disabilities. The teachers revealed that children with disabilities left their homes in order to attend far-away secondary schools, and they thought this would make it difficult for their parents to follow up on their educational progress. However, it was also revealed that even parents who lived nearer to the schools were reluctant to help teachers with the education of these children. The teachers blamed this on parental pessimism about these children's academic success. The teachers stated that some of the children with disabilities were orphans who were taken care of by the Ministry of Social Development (social welfare) – in which case the challenge of lacking supportive guardians still existed:

"... most of the time bana banang le disabilities ha bana supportive guardians kapa batsoali. Most of the time e ba bana ba social welfare eo le eona e sa ba

thuseng ho felella ... Some of them, their parents ke batho bao ekang ba se ba lahlehetsoe ke hope. E kare ha se ba batlosa hae fela hore ba mpe be ee sekolong. They do not expect much out of them. Batsoali ba bontsa basena tsepo ho bona ea hore ba kaba le bokamoso bo chabileng.” [Most of the time children with disabilities lack supportive guardians or parents. Most of them are taken care of by the Ministry of Social Welfare. Some of the parents have lost hope about their children with disabilities. They just take these children to school without expecting anything positive in respect of their educational outcomes.] (P1U)

Drawing from Bourdieu (1990), the apparent cynicism towards the education of children with disabilities can be ascribed to the parents’ embodied cultural capital. It was stated in section 1.1 (iii), that disability was perceived negatively by the Basotho. Using Bourdieu’s concept of capital, this negative attitude towards disability qualifies as cultural capital – implying that non-financial social assets might promote social movement, such as interactions in class beyond economic means (Klibthong, 2012). Although the situation has improved significantly (Matlosa and Matobo, 2007), the taboo perception of disability has not been completely eradicated, as it was stated that some parents still hid their disabled children from the public. As per the participants, this practice caused such children to lose self-confidence and to attempt to hide their disabilities from their school communities. Thus, due to the nature of their symbolic capital (disabled status), children with disabilities were less valued within their field (their communities and schools) – and this had impacted negatively on their habitus, so resulting in self-devaluation and low self-esteem. One participant stated that:

“ke ne ke lula le room mate ea neng a khaohile leoto. O ne a kenya leoto le artificial. Ha ane a tseba hore o inotsi, joale a robala, o ne a ntsa leoto leno le seeta se ho lona. O ne a fihla a le tsetleha leboteng fela a robala. Ha a ne a se a robetse joalo, he couldn’t allow moeti, haholo oa ausi, hore a kene katlung ka mono.” [I once had a leg amputee room-mate. He used an artificial leg. When sleeping, he used to take off the artificial leg, but he could not take it off in the presence of any visitors, let alone allow any of them in our room when the leg was detached.] (P4U)

Parents are the primary educators of their children. They are considered to be the most important and enduring influence on their children’s development (Winkler, Modise and Dawber, 2004). Perhaps parental pessimism about the academic potential of children with disabilities has been passed from generation to generation

through socialisation of culture and traditions over time – and this has impressed itself on individual habitus. This probably became the character or way of parental thinking about people with disabilities (Bourdieu, 1990). This thinking about education of children with disabilities is in direct contrast with the assertion of Miles (2005), Stubbs (2002) and DFID (2010), that education can empower people with disabilities by equipping them with skills, enabling them to be role-players, and also to be productive within their communities. One participant proposed that the challenges of parental negativity in relation to the education of people with disabilities could be addressed through parental education, and probably through awareness-raising campaigns:

“Batsoali babang bahlile ba pata bana banang le bokooa. Ha ba rutiloe hantle, ba tla tseba ho hlahisa bana bano e le hore batsebe ho fumana thuto.” [Some parents hide their children with disabilities. With proper education, they will expose them and take them to schools.] (P4R)

Teachers in the rural group seemed to be worried that parents value traditional schooling over academic schooling. Although in both groups the teachers appeared to be discontented with the level of support they received from parents, the rural group was more concerned that parents portrayed an “anti-educational” behaviour that resulted in high dropout rates. This group complained that children were taken out of school for “simple reasons” such as herding animals, attending initiation schools, or because of corporal punishment in schools. The teachers in this group ascribed this to parents lack (or low level) of institutional capital in the form of academic education. The teachers in the urban group appealed to their Ministry of Social Development to teach parents about the proper care of children with disabilities, and about the benefits of taking them to school. In Ghana, Pryor and Ampiah (2003, 2004) reported that most of the parents in the town of Akurase were indifferent to or uninterested in the education of their children – as to them it was unproductive in terms of their future careers as farmers. Thus, they did not bother to engage with the learning activities of their children.

The teachers pointed out that inclusion in their context demanded partnership and collaboration among all stakeholders in secondary education – including their government, parents and professionals from other fields (e.g. psychologists,

professional counsellors and medical doctors). This call was probably influenced by their culture of communality: “it takes a village to raise a child” (Mbambo, 2002:7). In effect, collaboration with specialists on various issues allows for the provision of advice and guidance to the classroom teacher on interventions and programmes to be followed by those with special educational needs (Rose and Howley, 2007). Eizadirad (2016) showed how parental support is crucial for a child’s learning, and provided an account of his educational experiences in a new environment: “[c]ultural differences and language barriers made school very difficult for me to the extent that I felt I did not belong” (Eizadirad, 2016:8). The author indicates that even though schooling was an uphill journey for him, the support he received from his parents, teachers and mentors inspired him not to give up: “Unfortunately, it is tragic that many students do not get the same opportunity that I was offered; an opportunity to progress his/herself to their full potential because they are not guided in a supportive and inclusive learning environment” (Eizadirad, 2016:8). Siebalak (2002) also maintains that parents should be empowered to be the main agents of change for educational inclusion.

Due to their socio-economic status and unemployment, most parents in Lesotho leave their children in the care of grandparents or siblings. At times, child-headed households are a result of being orphaned. The grandparents may find it difficult to take care of the wellbeing of such children – especially when they are illiterate and cannot help learners with schoolwork (the researcher’s experience). The participants in the current study seemed worried about what they referred to as contemporary trends of child-headed households and “Westernisation” of their communities. They considered children’s behavioural challenges to derive from parental failure to instil good behaviour in them. Some children were considered to be orphans, while others were away from their parents as a result of attending schools far away from their homes, or because their parents worked far from home. However, parents who stayed at home with their children were blamed for adopting a Western culture of individualism – thereby abandoning their African culture of communality. Commenting on the bad effects of Western civilisation and culture on Africa, Arowolo (2010:2) stresses that:

“With Africa subjugated and dominated, the Western culture and European mode of civilisation began to thrive and outgrow African cultural heritage. Traditional African cultural practices paved the way for [a] foreign way of doing things as Africans became fully ‘westernised’. Western culture now is regarded as frontline civilisation. African ways of doing things became primitive, archaic and regrettably unacceptable in [the] public domain.”

The participants raised concerns about the ratio of children with disabilities to those without disabilities, being lower in their schools than in surrounding villages. They pointed out that five-year periods could elapse without coming across a child with a disability in some of their schools. They were concerned that this could result in them forgetting some special educational skills. As per the teachers, potential contributory factors to the lower numbers of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, could include: parental poverty, parent attempts to hide their children with disabilities, secondary school perceptions of such children as being potential failures in future examinations, government’s minimal support to inclusion initiatives, and other weaknesses such as a lack of resources. Research reveals a generally low transition of needy students from primary to secondary schools in Lesotho. Ntho (2013) found that in the year 2008, 114 486 orphaned (needy) children were enrolled in primary schools while only 32 860 were enrolled in secondary schools – and that these needy children (over 80 000) got excluded from secondary education mostly because, unlike primary education, secondary education was not free. Ntho (2013) further argued that although the government of Lesotho and different NGOs sponsored needy children at this level of education, there was still a problem of transparency in the selection process for qualifying children. Thus, some needy children were left out, while those who did not qualify for the sponsorship were in fact selected.

Although IE calls for children with disabilities to attend school at a similar age to their non-disabled peers (United Nations, 2006), the teachers said that in their context, children with disabilities attended school when they are older. They pointed out a number of factors that could contribute to this. One factor was school infrastructural inaccessibility, which could be more prominent for younger children with disabilities. It was assumed that at an older age, children with disabilities could more easily find ways to deal with school infrastructural barriers. Reflected here is a limitation in objectified cultural capital, in terms of inaccessible resources for younger children

with disabilities. Another barrier was the ill-treatment that learners with disabilities received in mainstream schools. Being older was perceived as helping them to defend themselves against perpetrators. Looking disheartened, the teachers revealed that, at times, students with disabilities misbehaved and became rebellious in an attempt to protect themselves from ill-treatment and discrimination at mainstream schools. Consequently, they proposed the need for mainstream schools to make more of an effort to maximise safety and security – mainly against bullying. One teacher conveyed that:

“Safety ea ngoana ea disabled. Haeba o se a ntse a sena mokhoa oa ho iketsetsa lintho tseling, ho hlakile hore ngoana ea joalo o hloka tsireletso e khethehileng ha a le sekolong. Re ea tseba hore bana ba sekolo ba rata ho loana. Joale safety ea hae e lokela hore e netefatsoe.” [Bullying is very common in our schools. If children with disabilities cannot do some things for themselves, then it means they are vulnerable to others in terms of bullying. So, their safety in our schools must be guaranteed.] (P2R)

Thus, due to limitations in symbolic capital (policy against bullying in secondary schools), children with disabilities were forced to attend school at a comparatively older age so that they could defend themselves. Klibthong (2012) attested to a positive network of relations in a school (among learners and between learners and teachers). This network is what Bourdieu (1998) refers to as a field (Mills and Gale, 2007). According to Klibthong (2012), when classrooms reflect war zones, IE moves further away from many disadvantaged children. Other research has found that learners with disabilities are likely to be perceived as different, are more likely to be ostracised, to lack friends, and to be bullied – compared with their classmates (Llewellyn, 2000).

The teachers in the rural group demanded that children with hearing impairment be taught sign language prior to their integration into secondary schools:

“Bana ba sa tsebeng sign language ba ka fana bothata ba hore le motho ea ka lekang ho ba thusa ka ho bahlalosetsa lithuto ka eona, ba ke se thusehe. Ngoana ea joalo o loketse ho ea special school a lo e rutoa, kapa a rutoe sign language pele a tlisoa sekolong sa rona. Ha se le ho mokhetholla, empa le eona tichere ea sign language, e ntse e e rutiloe hore ebe o oa e tseba.” [Learners with hearing impairment and those not yet familiar with sign language can present challenges even to teachers who are familiar with sign language. It will be difficult to teach them. Such learners must learn sign language prior to

their integration into our schools. Sign language can be mastered only through learning.] (P2R)

This thinking is typical of an integrated paradigm of placing children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools only after they have acquired skills that can enable them to cope with mainstream schooling (Miles, 2005; Sharma and Deppeler, 2005; Stubbs, 2002). Thus, SEN children → improved skills → mainstream class. The teachers had declared themselves as lacking in proficiency in terms of sign language – so it was unclear how they would benefit from children's proficiency in sign language. However, they explained they were assuming a scenario where there would be sign language-proficient support teachers.

Kotele (2000) reveals that Lesotho is one of the countries that still has many socio-economic limitations that hinder the success of IE systems. The author identifies lack of teaching and human resource materials, lack of funds, lack of support, and lack of appropriate transportation as the major impediments to inclusion initiatives in Lesotho. This idea is shared *inter alia* by Johnstone and Chapman (2009), Eriamiatoe (2013) and Mosia (2014). Some of the socio-economic challenges to inclusion that Kotele (2000) identified were restated by teachers as being pervasive in their schools. These were a lack of Braille machines, hearing aids, projectors, video tapes and tape recorders; a lack of funds; a lack of parental and government support; and schools being inaccessible for children with mobility impairment.

The participants also mentioned some unfortunate cases of children's ill-treatment by their parents at home, and those children carrying their frustrations to their schools. One participant sadly mentioned that one of their students used to misbehave and they once met with his father after several unsuccessful attempts to summon him to school. In their meeting with the father, the teachers found that he was extremely abusive to his children – thereby emotionally harming them:

“... Ka nako e 'ngoe, batsoali ke bona ba libakang. Ngoana enoa e se empa e le photocopy fela, bothata bo ho motsoali.... 'Joale ntate o na le li affairs tsa lerato le bo ausi mang mang. Joale le kalapeng ka mona o re arotse. O re babang hase bana ba hae.” O cho joalo ntate oa hae a le teng. “Ha a noele, o fa bao areng ke bahae chelete. Ebe o hloella tafoleng o sesetsa bao a reng ha se bahae’.” [At times, children's bad behaviour in schools is just a perpetuation of the type of life they lead at their homes. In his father's presence, the child

told us that his father used to have love affairs with young ladies they knew and that when he was drunk, he would refer to some of his children as not his biological children. Then, he would give money to those he referred to as his own blood (biological ones).] (P1U)

Cases such as the one mentioned above might necessitate intensifying education on proper parenting. As per the research participants, the task of educating parents about proper parenting was supposed to be done mainly by the Ministry of Social Development. They also believed that it could be resolved by forming parent-teacher associations in order to share information on proper parenting: “... Parent-teacher associations *mokhatlo ono o lule hangata ho fanana ka malebela lipakeng tsa batsoali le matichere....*” [The formation of parent-teacher associations can help to facilitate the exchange of information between teachers and parents] (P2U). Indeed, Africans believe in collective or corporate responsibility, where every member is directly responsible for the welfare of the distressed member(s) of society (Mbambo, 2002).

4.4.2 Findings related to teaching strategies

Mittler (2000) explains that tolerance in education ensures that a framework is developed within which all children are afforded equal opportunities in education, and that they are respected – irrespective of their gender, ethnic origin, ability, or language. The interviewees unanimously stated that teachers needed passion, tolerance, patience and positive attitudes when dealing with learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs. They discouraged practices of dodging slow-learner classes if abled and disabled learners were placed together in one classroom, and monopolising teaching methods that did not help all learners. One of them emphasised these issues by saying that:

“Matichere a mang a ea teneha ke ho ruta bana ba liehang ho utloisisa. We have to be patience ho bana ba joalo ... Ho kase ho nepahale hore tichere ha e ruta e siee morao bana ba liehang ho utloisisa ka lebaka la ho teneha ke bona” [Some teachers lose patience with slow-learners. We must be patient with slow-learners and avoid leaving them behind when teaching.] (P1R)

Teacher training for mainstream school teachers rarely prepares them for working in diverse classrooms (see section 4.2.4). It “... does not equip [teachers] with the

confidence, knowledge and skills to effectively support learners with disabilities” (International Disability and Development Consortium [IDDC], 2013:7). As IDDC (2013) stresses, progress towards EFA requires that regular teachers be prepared to meet the learning and participation needs of children with disabilities. The teachers should be given appropriate initial training, ongoing training, professional development opportunities, and ongoing access to adequate high-quality support and advice from specialist personnel. Teachers supported the idea of equipping regular teachers with skills to enable them to teach learners with diverse abilities. One of them said that:

“I think such schools [inclusive schools] should have teachers who are equipped with skills for helping or dealing with such people who have special educational needs, because if you just take a normal teacher [a teacher without special education skills], some of them will not be able to offer the necessary assistance.” (P4U)

Another teacher from the rural focus group further supported the view of equipping regular teachers with the necessary skills, by sharing her own workplace experience:

“Nna hona le ngoana ea neng a ena le disability ea neng a kena sekolong sa rona. So, e be re tsoareloa meeting ke principal a re bolella ka ngoana eno. E be batho babang ba botsa hore na re tla moruta joang.... We did not have skills to teach her.” [Our principal summoned us to a meeting where she informed us about a child with a disability who was going to be part of our school. My colleagues asked her how we were going to teach the child, because we were not skilled to teach such children.] (P5R)

Also reflecting that lack of skills to teach children with severe needs/disabilities is a major challenge to them, another teacher from the rural focus group humbly sought advice from group mates on teaching such children. She said:

“Ke ea utloa hore we have to cater for bana bohle [I understand that we have to cater for all types of learners.] But, there was a case in my school involving a student who could not see at all. A sa bone hohang [She had totally lost her vision] ... A lutse kapele classeng empa a ntse a sa bone boardeng. Re ne re lokela ho mothusa joang? [She could not see anything written on the board. How were we supposed to teach her?]” (P4R)

The unanimous response was that such children should be taken to special schools. Scholars in the field of IE [e.g. Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005); Bones and Lambe (2007); Chhabra, Srivastava and Srivastava (2010); Boer, Pijl and Minnaert (2011)]

indicate that lack of skills in regular teachers to address individual learners needs, is a contributing factor to the negative attitudes of teachers in relation to IE. In other words, limited institutional cultural capital (in the form of skills) makes it harder for teachers to implement IE in their schools. Using the concept of Bourdieu's cultural capital, teachers could be viewed as human capital equipped with certain skills and knowledge in order to be useful to their employers (MOET in this study) – in their endeavours to promote IE in their schools (Grenfell, 2009). Clearly, if this human capital lacks institutional cultural capital to implement inclusion, then MOET's vision of inclusion will be jeopardised.

Daane and Beirne-Smith (2001) found that their interviewees perceived IE as being difficult to implement because it required extra time for teaching and planning. Time as a constraint for implementing IE is also reflected in other studies – such as Loreman, Forlin and Sharma (2007). In the current study, the teachers claimed they struggled to make time for slow-learner students. They reported that they taught at a faster pace in order to meet examination time requirements. On the other hand, they had to teach at a leisurely rate when much time had been spent helping slow learners. One teacher asserted that: *“Hape re ruta le ka nako e ka thoko ho ea ho ruta molemong oa ho lelekisa nako e senyehileng.”* [We also teach at leisure time in order to make up for the time lost (as a result of extended explanations in class)] (P5R). Another teacher from a different group added the following:

“Le syllabus content e tlabe e bonahala e le ngata empa nako e le nyane and u tlameha ho caterala bana banang le bo disabilities kapa mohlomong ba lieha ho tsoara lintho tse rutoang kapele. So u so ba hobela fela haeba u sena mokhoa oa ho creata nako e ka thoko ho ea sekolo molemong oa bona.” [Too much syllabus content is supposed to be taught within a limited time. So, you just rush through the syllabus, and, where possible, you create time outside of class for slow-learners.] (P5U)

Some teachers learned the hard way in terms of prioritising syllabus content (or examination excellence) over student understanding of the subject matter. It was found that in one school a teacher got into trouble because he focused too much on helping slow-learners rather than teaching in order to finish the syllabus before the examinations. The teacher's symbolic capital (his status within his school) enabled his authorities to overpower his institutional cultural capital (his learned skills of teaching children who learned at a slower pace). Thus, the teacher could not set his

own educational outcomes. Indeed, scholars have warned that examination orientation in schools jeopardises IE initiatives (Ainscow *et al.*, 2006; Howes *et al.*, 2005). Pinar (2004) found that an examination-orientated curriculum demotes teachers from scholars and intellectuals to being technicians merely in service of the state. A teaching approach in which teachers simply implement the curriculum guidelines “... renders teachers unable to teach” (Pinar, 2004:4) – as what teachers know and think has been disregarded. In other words, teaching becomes fruitless when teachers’ symbolic and institutional cultural capital are disrespected.

IE supporters contest a learner-centred teaching approach (LCT) in inclusive schools (Miles, 2000; Maguvhe, 2006; Westwood, 2007). LCT is compatible with Bourdieu’s (1998) concept of an active learning environment, in which children with and without disabilities are enabled to engage in group discussions, co-construction of meaning, exploration, and curiosity (Fleer, 2011). This concept involves increasing children’s involvement in class through an active learning environment, which strengthens relationships within schools in order to make IE successful (Mundia, 2009). In support of LCT, Eizadirad (2016) cautions against a teacher-centred approach – claiming that it deprives learners of the opportunities to have discussions or to exchange ideas. In the same manner, the interviewees found that student-to-student teaching was more effective than the teacher-centred approach. They ascribed this to lack of rapport between learners and their teachers, as a result of corporal punishment:

“... Ha ngoana oa sekolo a utloisisitse, o hlaloesetsa babang betere hofeta ka moo tichere e neng e tla hlalosa ... Ke ee bone hore babang ba ba free haholo ho botsa baithuti mmoho hoba joale rona ba ea re tsaba hoba re ea ba shapa, re re ba bue sekhooda.” [A learner who has understood the concept explains to others better than his/her teacher. I have realised that learners are freer to interact among themselves than with their teachers – mainly because we practice corporal punishment against them, so forcing them to speak English.] (P3U)

However, the teachers did not seem to practice a significant amount of LCT. The teachers contested that their examination-orientated curriculum forced them to teach at a faster pace, using a teacher-centred approach. The rural focus group stated that structural constraints also hindered their quest to practice LCT. One participant in this group, stated it as follows:

“... re khothaletsoa ho sebelisa learner-centred approaches of teaching and learning. Joale nna ke tlabe ke ruta science ke re bana bae science laboratory ho ea etsa experiments. Ngoana ea sebelisang wheelchair ena ha a atlehe ho etsa litho ka mono, kapa ea sa tsebeng ho tsoara ka matsoho. Ho na le manipulative skills tseo re lokelang ho li chorisa baneng. E leng hore o lokela ho iketsetsa lintho. Ea sebelisang wheelchair litafole li phahame haholo hore a ka lifihlela ...” [We are encouraged to apply a learner-centred approach to teaching in our schools. In physical science, the experiments are intended to develop manipulative skills in learners, but this is impossible with learners who use wheelchairs, as the laboratory tables are too high for them. These skills cannot be nurtured in learners who cannot handle things due to their disabilities.] (P3R)

Both groups vowed they would not stop using corporal punishment in respect of learners – despite acknowledging it was against their teaching regulations. It appeared that the teachers used corporal punishment with learners who did not conform to their school regulations. Corporal punishment is however permitted under certain circumstances in Lesotho’s School (Supervision and Management) Regulations of 1988, Regulation 55. It was only recently that education authorities in Lesotho banned it in the Education Act of 2010. This Act asserts that corporal punishment should be abolished because it is contrary to section 8 (1) of the Constitution of Lesotho, which stipulates that a person shall not be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading punishment. Traditionally, the Basotho appeared to embrace corporal punishment, as it has even appeared in some of their idioms – such as: “*thupa e otolloa e sa le metsi*”, [spare the rod, spoil the child]. Thus, practising corporal punishment has a bearing in teacher cultural transmission and has informed the teachers’ habitus with regard to classroom management. Klibthong (2012) states that the dispositions of teachers and children inevitably reflect the context in which they were acquired. According to Bourdieu (1998), habitus is embodied but visible through practice. Thus, teachers’ values, beliefs and dispositions became visible in how they conducted their practices in classrooms (through corporal punishment, in this case).

Scholars have found that corporal punishment affects every learner in mainstream schools in Lesotho, including those with disabilities: “Mamello (a girl with brittle bone disease) was able to carry on in a mainstream school, despite beatings from teachers, because of help from friends” (Stubbs, 2002:36). It also appeared that

some parents encouraged teachers to continue corporal punishment: “*Ha ke mobitsa ... o tlabe a re, re kene likolo re shapuo. Le uena shapa ngoana eno ...*” [If you call parents to school they will tell you that they were whipped when they were students and that we must also whip learners – instead of calling them to school] (P2U). Apparently, some parents disliked corporal punishment, as the research participants claimed that some parents attempted to use their children’s disabilities to save them from corporal punishment in schools:

“Lehoja ka nako e’ngoe le ha ba rutiloe ba bile ba batlisitse sekolong, u tla fumana hore babang ba bona ba emela bana le ha ba entse liphoso tse hlokanang ho khalemeloa. Ho se ho boletsoe hore batsoali ha ba tsoane. Emong u tlo utloa a se a re, ngoana enoa oaka ha a shapuo hobane o tjena le tjena. Fela u fumane u le tichere hore ngoana enoa o hlile o lokela ho khalemeloa ka thupa.” [Some parents may be informed about the benefits of taking their children with disabilities to school. However, they tend to overprotect such children from corporal punishment. They use their disability as an excuse to avoid corporal punishment.] (P2R)

It was revealed in section 1.1.1, that English is a second language in Lesotho, and that it is a medium of instruction in Lesotho secondary schools. Consequently, most secondary schools in Lesotho prioritised English-language proficiency in learners. The teachers revealed that they forced their learners to speak English whenever they were in school – and failure to comply was considered a breach of school regulations, and resulted in corporal punishment, suspension or other forms of punishment. The teachers commented that this practice resulted in negative relationships with parents and learners. They cited cases of parents partnering with their children against teachers on the same issue. Some cases of dropouts resulting from punishment for speaking Sesotho instead of English in schools, were also reported:

“Ke tlabe ke punishile bana ka tsela e tsoanang, empa batsoali babang ba tle sekolong ba tlo belaela ka chapo eno, ba bile ba tsepisa ho nts’a bana ba bona sekolo ka lebaka leno ... Hangata ba re tsebisa litaba tseno ba se ba entse geto ea ho tlohela sekolo, ho se ho bile hose bonolo ho fetola maikutlo a bona.” [Some parents would come to our school to complain about corporal punishment that their children would have been subjected to, and they would threaten to take their children out of school. At times they would report to us only when they had already taken them out of school and it often became difficult to make them reverse their decisions.] (P1R)

The negative impacts of a second language's dominance in schools are well documented. De Klerk (2002) and De Wet (2002) warn against the dominant use of the English language as a medium of instruction in Southern African schools. At times, the teacher would speak the same language as the learners, but would be instructed not to use that language – in favour of the official language of instruction (see SCF, 2008). In such cases, local language learning materials become irrelevant. In which case, teachers spend much time translating materials into the formal language of instruction, so slowing down the learning process (SCF, 2008).

In South Africa, the high status of the English language and the negative social context of the African languages in high-functioning public contexts, have resulted in a strong preference for English as a medium of instruction (Webb, 2004). Webb indicated that in South African schools, the school governing bodies consequently adopted a policy in which English was the official medium of instruction. Webb (2004) further argues that such a policy presented a serious problem – since black learners' English-language proficiency in South Africa was often inadequate for use as a language of learning. Another South African study by Mahlo (2011), found that in Gauteng, most learners who were often regarded as having barriers to learning, were actually taught in a language that was not their mother tongue – so creating problems because such children could not understand instructions. Consequently, Mahlo cautions teachers that learners who might be perceived as experiencing barriers to learning, might in fact be disadvantaged because of the language of instruction used.

Hume (2008) believes that every language provides a unique point of view that is important to the cosmos of ideas, metaphors, miracles and metaphysics, that comprise the totality of human experience. Therefore, if learners are to access the curriculum, their first language has to be taken into consideration – so that it is easier for them to transfer what they know into new ideas presented to them (Otukile-Mongwaketse, 2011). Similarly, Bourdieu (1990) considers linguistic capital to be an example of an embodied cultural capital. It is argued that the linguistic capital “represents a means of communication and self-presentation acquired from one's surrounding culture, and is critical to teaching and learning in inclusive classrooms” (Bourdieu, 1990:114).

A science teacher in the rural focus group exposed their confusion about extended and core syllabi in mathematics and science. According to the teacher, these syllabi were intended for fast-learners and slow-learners respectively. However, the teacher found that this initiative presented challenges to teachers with regard to the lack of:

- Clarity on the criteria for categorising learners accordingly; and
- Space (classrooms) and human resources – so resulting in both groups learning only the extended syllabus in the same classroom, at the same time, and taught by the same teacher(s).

Responding to a question from a group member who demanded clarification on how learners distinguished between core and extended syllabus content when they were taught in the same classroom, the teacher said the following:

“Nna ha nke ke ba joetse seo ba lokelang ho se tseba le seo ba lokelang ho se siea. Ke ruta feela. Ke nna feela ea tsebang hore ha ba fihla form E ke tla ba ngolisa lipotso tsa core feela. Ha ba le form D ba ke se tsebe hore ke bafe ba tla qetella ba etsa syllabus efe. Joale ke baruta extended syllabus kaofela ha bona.” [I teach them the same thing. It is only me who knows they will sit for different papers at the end of the year. But, in class I teach all of them the extended syllabus.] (P5R)

The above statement indicates that frustrations and the helplessness of the teachers, when they do not understand what is expected of them, ultimately affects the education of learners.

The interviewees alluded to IE presenting them with hard work. Their argument was based mainly on lack of time for planning and marking learners' work. Some of them movingly stated:

“... Ka nnete ntate bana bao re sebetsanang le bona ke boima bo tsabehang. Hona tjena u tsebe hore ke ea cross-nighta. Ke qeta bosiu ke trancriba e le hore motseare ke tsoae. Ke mosebetse o boima hona hoo. Ka nnete ho boima....” [Truly, it is difficult to teach the type of learners we have. I work even at night transcribing Braille scripts, so that I can mark my subject's work during the day. This is extremely hard work.] (P6U)

“... Hape ke tichere e lokelang ho ruta bana babang ho mohlokomela hoba tichere e ke ke ea lula e hlokometse ngoana ea joalo ka linako tsohle.” [It is

also the teacher's duty to ensure that others push the wheelchair users around, failing which it is the teacher's burden to do so.] (P5R)

This finding concurs with Forlin and Lian (2008) – that the inclusion of children with special needs at a regular school means additional work being added to the existing workload of the teacher. In the same vein, Daane and Beirne-Smith (2001) found that the teachers participating in their study believed that the presence of children with disabilities in their general education classrooms, increased their instructional load. The urban focus group felt that the hard work associated with IE warranted incentives being offered to them. One teacher in the group put it as follows:

“Ke kopa hore ke qetelle ka hore ke bona kannete mmuso o sitoa ho motivate batho ba nang le likolo tse nkang bana banang le disabilities kannete. Hone ho loketse hore bo be le allowancenyanana. Ka nnete ntate bana bao re sebetsanang le bona ke boima bo tsabehang. Hona tjena u tsebe hore ke ea cross-nighta. Ke qeta bosiu ke trancriba e le hore motseare ke tsoae. Ke mosebetsi o boima hona hoo. Ka nnete ho boima ... Kannene ke bothata bo boholo, haeba motho le ka weekend u tla tlameha hore u ee mosebetsing. E ka ho kaba le nthonyana le motivatang.” [May I conclude by saying our government does not motivate schools that enrol learners with disabilities. We work day and night – even over the weekends we are at work. This is really hard work. There is supposed to be some incentives for teachers in such schools. This would motivate them.] (P6U)

This comment indicates the teachers' feelings that they do a lot of work in terms of implementing IE, and that their efforts warrant recognition in the form of incentives such as increased salaries (economic capital). Johnstone and Chapman (2009) also reported Lesotho primary school teacher concerns about lack of motivation to implement IE in their schools. The teachers in their study also perceived IE to involve hard work – and therefore it warranted some form of incentives, such as additional pay or recognition in the form of certification for additional training. The provision of cash incentives to motivate teachers and their schools for their inclusion endeavours, has worked well in some countries. For example, in Kenya and the Czech Republic, schools were provided with a higher capitation grant per child with a disability (DFID, 2010). Cash incentives to schools encourages them to provide a higher quality learning environment for children with disabilities (DFID, 2010).

4.4.3 Findings related to Ministry of Education and Training's contributions to inclusive education implementation

The education of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs is now an established key policy objective in many countries (Lindsay, 2007). While assessing IE developments in selected developing countries, Mittler (2003) found that although none could claim to have developed fully-inclusive systems, some had made striking progress not only in formulating new policies but also in implementing them. According to Mittler (2003), their achievements could indicate that economically poorer countries can make significant progress in moving towards inclusive practice – if they are determined to do so. Thus, the success of inclusion is not bound exclusively to objectified cultural capital. Drawing from the data, the government of Lesotho, through the MOET, portrayed minimal determination to make IE succeed in the secondary schools. The teachers complained about the government using final examination results to discredit their inclusive teaching efforts. Moreover, the teachers seemed confused about the education inspectorate's roles in their education system. It is indicated in the Lesotho Education Act, 2010 18 (4) (b), that one of the roles of the school inspectorate is to provide support and advice to schools. On the other hand, the teachers stated that the inspectors used to “attack” them, when learners had failed final examinations in large numbers. One participant argued it, as follows:

“... Ha li results li etsoa, ke batsoali ba betsang sekolo ka majoe, “sekolo sena se feilisitse bana ba rona. Bana ba pasitseng hantle ba se ba isuo a likolong tseling ke batsoali bao. E ba le Ministry of Education o se hlasela ka li inspectors. Joale e ba li inspectors li tla batla hore na matichere a ntse a etsa li lesson plan. Empa e le hore education is broad. Ha se fela taba ea matichere ho etsa li lesson plan e hlokahalang.” [After publication of final examination results, parents are the first to blame our schools for failing their children. Surprisingly, MOET would also believe that we had failed to execute our duties well – thereby failing the learners. Then, they would send education inspectors to our schools, only for them to perpetuate parental verbal attacks against us and then demand lesson plans, as if teaching is solely about preparing lesson plans.] (P2U)

In relation to the functions of the education inspectorate (section 1.1 [ii]), it can be implied that it was within the education inspectors' jurisdiction to demand lesson plans –in order to assess teacher effectiveness in class. This would probably help

them to provide the necessary support and advice to the teachers, and also to monitor the effects and effectiveness of testing and examinations. Planning the lessons helps teachers to avoid unintended perpetuation of inequalities and injustices against some children in their classes (Mills and Gale, 2007). Hence, teachers are encouraged to use their well-designed instructions to create an active learning environment – to involve children, establish relationships, and ensure all children’s wellbeing by recognising the different forms of capital each child brings to the inclusive class (Klibthong, 2012). It was stated that inspectors were to adopt a “whole school approach” in their inspection (section 1.1 [ii]). However, the data provided no evidence of this approach being used. Instead, statements such as “*Ha ba shebe mefuta ea bana bao re ba rutang*” [they do not take into consideration our different types of learners] contradict the notion of the whole school approach to inspection. Also, it appeared that inspection was done only when damage had already been done: when learners had already failed. Arguably, this could provide very little (if no) help to those already adversely affected by the examinations. Furthermore, the above extract reflects communication in a top-down mode only. Thus, teachers and inspectors never share ideas – and hence the use of the phrase “attack us”.

The teachers explained that secondary schools that attempted inclusion were less desired by parents and their government – resulting in fewer parents taking their non-disabled children to such schools. Their declining learner enrolments had prompted MOET to threaten to shut down such schools. In response, the teachers focused more attention on improved academic results, in order to attract more learners:

“Ke le tichere ha ke tsebe hore ho lo botsoa eng ka mane ka examinations haholo external classes. Fela ha ke qetile syllabus, ka ba ka drilla bana hantle, ke ea tseba hore bana bano ba ready hore ba ka ngola. Ntho e fe kapa e fe e ka botsoang, ba ka tseba ho e araba.... Ke ee ke utloe lipuo tse joalo li le bohloko haholo.” [As a teacher, I do not know the final examination questions. Teaching the entire syllabus content puts my learners in a better position to pass the examinations. It hurts to hear learners complaining that they did not attempt certain questions because they were based on things that were not taught in class.] (P1R)

Farrell (2005) and Brook (2008) indicated that when schools operate in a competitive educational marketplace, the national league tables provide parents with information about school achievements, and while value-added scores are available – parents are likely to focus on school academic results and select those with the highest pass rates. Consequently, in their desire to attract more (non-disabled) learners, schools could be disadvantaging learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs (House of Commons, 2006).

There is, however, a lack of evidence that school competition leads to improvements in efficiency. Rather, it has been found to result in the unintended consequences of excluding children with disabilities and/or special educational needs (Duckworth, Akerman, Morrison, Gutman and Vorhaus, 2009). Besides, the authenticity of the schools resorting to examination orientation in order to increase learner enrolment is questionable – as Ntho (2013) has highlighted major disparities in Lesotho's distribution of secondary schools by zone and district. The author believes that this distribution creates overcrowding in some schools, while others have lower learner to teacher ratios.

The teachers described the requirements of their field, as to teach students to pass examinations. Through Bourdieu's (1990) lens, schools would represent sub-fields in the education field, and teachers exercised their institutional cultural capital within these sub-fields. Final examinations could be viewed as a form of symbolic capital, against which teacher performance was evaluated.

In general, the teachers agreed that their government needed to do more to promote, improve and sustain IE implementation in Lesotho secondary schools. They declared that inclusive secondary schools in Lesotho were very few in number, and that they were owned by the private sector (churches). However, the data revealed that the government of Lesotho had started responding to this call, by erecting secondary schools that could accommodate wheelchair users. The teachers also confirmed Ntho's (2013) assertion that their government took the responsibility of paying school fees for needy students. Nonetheless, they pointed out that government paid school fees towards the end of academic years – which disturbed the smooth running of their school events.

Support teachers were also considered to be essential for relieving mainstream school teachers from a work over-load. Consequently, the teachers appealed to the government to create positions for support teachers within their schools:

“... sekolo ka seng se loketse hore se be le tichere eo eleng hore o ithutile haholo ka special education. Joale hore taba eno e phethahale li grants litla hlaha mmusong” [Each secondary school must have a support teacher who has undergone extensive training in special education. Our government can make this possible by creating positions for such teachers in our schools.] (P5R)

The role of support teachers in the classroom has been considered critical to the success of inclusion (Farrell, 2000; OFSTED, 2002). According to OFSTED (2002), the quality of teaching is better in classes with support staff, than in those without them – and the problems associated with the severity of the learner’s learning difficulty can be diminished. Due to lack of experience of working alongside a support teacher, one participant in the urban focus group seemed confused about the roles of a support teacher in a mainstream class:

“But I am thinking of a case where the support teacher wants to whip the kid and the kid does not feel that the support teacher is his/her [class] teacher. Maybe this is new to me, so it is not very clear. Two teachers per class! One is blind [and] the other [one] is normal. This blind one is talking, the normal one is writing on the board. And when it comes to punishing learners – eish, there is chaos. Two teachers are punishing learners (laughing). I don’t know if we will get there, but if the resources are there it will be good to have it (a support teacher).” (P1U)

It transpired that after rationalising secondary school fees in the year 2012, the government of Lesotho promised grants to help secondary schools run their developmental projects. However, the teachers stated that their schools had never received such funding – despite several attempts to source it. They stated that these “empty promises” negatively affected the daily running of their schools, as they could no longer purchase necessary materials – and this made their inclusion efforts more difficult to undertake.

The challenges that the teachers had encountered due to their limited skills in respect of IE implementation, prompted them to suggest that special education be made compulsory for teacher trainees. Skills in Braille competency, sign language,

dealing with epileptic learners, disability and curriculum assessments, were all considered by the teachers to be crucial for them.

The next section examines the ways that the teachers adapted their pedagogical practices in order to maximise their learners' accommodation in class and also their educational success.

4.5 Teachers' classroom practices and successes

What strategies do you use in your class to ensure that students with disabilities and/or special educational needs don't fall through the "cracks" – thus to ensure optimal and uniform gain?

What are your success stories regarding your teaching of children with different abilities and/or special educational needs in your school?

What are the challenges or constraints? How do you overcome them?

Schools must adapt so that they can be "physically, socially, and instructionally integrating students with disabilities" (Parsons, Williams, Burrowbridge and Mauk, 2011:723). Adaptation, in this context, refers to "... any adjustment in the environment, instruction, or materials for learning that enhances the students' performance and allows for at least partial participation ... for individual students based on their specific learning needs and should be based on their strengths as well as weaknesses" (Darrow, 2008:32). Furthermore, Bourdieu (1999:126) points out that: "... space is one of the sites where power is asserted and exercised." Teachers assert their power in the classroom through classroom management and their everyday decisions (Eizadirad, 2016). It is however crucial that teachers become flexible in their teaching by adapting situations in the best interest of all learners (Acedo, Ferrer and Pámies, 2009; Peters, 2007). Students need different things at different times and a 'one size fits all' approach cannot meet the needs of specific disability, except by adaptation (Parsons *et al.*, 2011:22). On application of Bourdieu's (1985, 1999) concepts of habitus, capital and field, DiGiorgio (2009) attests that in the field of school, the general school environment, among other facilities and resources, equates to the realm of economic capital. Economic capital (wealth) defined in monetary terms "can determine the choice and use of teaching

resources [for the purpose of adaptation] in a particular teaching situation” (Klibthong, 2012:73).

The teachers listed several strategies that they employed to help learners understand the subject content, in order to pass examinations. They focused on the classroom seating arrangement. With the rural focus group, the classroom seating arrangement focused on ensuring that all learners could see the writing on the chalk board and could hear teacher’s voice – taking into consideration those with mild visual and hearing impairments. On the other hand, the urban focus group separated fast-learners from slow-learners in the same classroom, or formed groups of slow-learners and distributed fast-learners among them. Those who separated fast-learners from slow-learners claimed that this helped them to have a one-on-one interaction with slow-learners, so enabling re-teaching. They also claimed to have discovered that fast-learners dominate slow-learners when they are seated randomly in the classroom. They accordingly favoured their separation – claiming that it empowered the slow-learners. Klibthong (2012:73) also believes that teachers “... can use their habitus to classify the members of their classrooms into various categories, for example, disabled, attention hyperactive disordered and so on.”

Other strategies that both groups used included promoting competitions based on the passing of written tests. One teacher in the urban focus group illustrated that his learners competed for the occupation of front seats, while a teacher in the rural group said that his learners competed for a prize (for example a new mathematical instrument set). The two groups also believed that corporal punishment encouraged learners to work harder. One teacher in the rural group stated that she used different teaching methods, in order to ensure that all learners could understand her subject content. However, when probed further by a group member, it was unclear how this worked in a single lesson (40 minutes). The teaching and learning methods that dominated their discussions were lecturing, demonstration and discussion. They stated that the lecturing method dominated their pedagogy. However, one teacher in the rural group claimed to use mostly demonstration method of teaching – stating that it was more appropriate for his subject. While these methods could deliver the results sought by the teachers, their supremacy in class could discriminate against certain learning styles. In fact, several studies have found that matches between

student learning styles and teaching strategies have a positive impact on the academic achievements of students [Arthurs (2007), Bell (2007), Tulbure (2012), Reid (2005), Damrongpanit and Reungtragu (2013)]. Therefore it is imperative that teachers diversify their teaching methods, in order to maximise learner understanding of their subject content.

The lecturing method of teaching (and to some extent the demonstration method) provides learners with few opportunities to be innovative and actively involved in their learning. Klibthong (2012:75) cautions against situations where children are perceived as simple participants and teachers as masters of knowledge: “[i]n situations where children are perceived as simplistic participants, exclusion becomes the dominant practice”. The author further argues that: “[w]hen children are regarded by teachers as non-experts they tend to impose predetermined structures on them which ‘humiliate’ their cultural capital – knowledge and experiences”. On the other hand, “[a] positive image of children enables teachers to enact teaching practices that consider children’s developmental strengths and their cultural and symbolic capital which they bring to the inclusive classroom” (Klibthong, 2012:75).

One teacher in the rural focus group proudly stated that, in her school, they once gave a “problematic” learner a responsibility as a school prefect and that this improved the learner’s behaviour and his academic performance. Another teacher in the same group was also proud of good passes in his subject as a result of giving learners much practice work. However, he also expressed concern over time constraints, which prevented him from giving learners further practice work. The same teacher stated that, in his school, teachers had formed a charity group that provided needy learners with some material support, in order to help them concentrate on academic work. Another participant in the urban focus group also seemed contented about the pass rate in her subject – attributing her success to her ability to instil the love of her subject in her learners. Corroborating this idea, a group member confided that he motivated his learners and equipped them with skills to succeed in their studies. Another strategy that seemed to work for the teachers in both focus groups, was to promote the spirit of supportiveness among learners, by encouraging those without visual impairments to write and read for those with visual impairments. One participant put it as follows:

“... u tla fumana hore bana bantseng ba bona hantle ba thusa bana ba sa boneng, ba ea ba balla libuka le linotes hoba ka classeng ha ba atlehe ho lingola, ba salla morao. Joale bana ba bonang ha ba le free ba ea ba balla linotes ebe bona ba ea li brailla. Le ka weekend ha matichere a le sieo, u tla fumana hore ba ea ba thusa ba ea ba balla.” [In their spare time, those with unimpaired vision usually help those with visual impairment by reading for them. This happens even over the weekends.] (P6U)

Indeed, Goldstein (2003) encourages teachers to explore creative ways of capitalising on peer social capital, as a means to assist learners in the learning process.

Both focus groups seemed certain that ability streaming (putting learners with comparable learning skills or needs in one classroom) could make teaching much easier for them. Ability streaming is more of a school policy (symbolic capital) than the individual teacher's classroom seating arrangements that were highlighted earlier. They claimed to have seen ability streaming working well in other schools. They listed some of its advantages: enabling slow-learners and fast-learners to get full attention from their teachers and enabling teachers to teach each group at an appropriate pace. They also listed its disadvantages, including: promoting arrogance among fast-learners, promoting stereotyping where a child would be familiar only with category mates, teachers dragging their feet when attending slow-learner classes, and slow-learner classes being given demoralising names by others. Klibthong (2012) cautions that teachers may in turn be affected by their classificatory systems. For example, “if teachers classify some children as limited in ability, they might do little to engage [with] them” (Klibthong, 2012:73). The disadvantages they mentioned did not deter their quest to practise ability streaming: “... *empa ke lakatsa hore re e sebelise sekolong sa ka ke ke bone hore na e ka thusa. Slow learner ba be nqa ele 'ngoe le fast learners ba be nqa e le 'ngoe.*” [I am willing to practice ability streaming. I want to see if it can benefit my school. The slow-learners will occupy their own class, while the fast-learners will also have their own [class]] (P3U).

Research suggests very limited support regarding the benefits of streaming children according to ability – in terms of levels of attainment (see e.g. Duckworth *et al.*, 2009; Blatchford, Hallam, Ireson, Kutnick, and Creech, 2008). Blatchford *et al.* (2008) provide evidence that there is a tendency for the quality of teaching to be

different for children in low ability (slow-learner) and high ability (fast-learner) classes. With the high ability classes, the expectation is that children will work more quickly, complete more difficult tasks, and benefit from enhanced opportunities. On the other hand, children placed in low ability classes have some topics omitted from their curriculum, and the expectations are comparatively lower. Thus, streaming students by ability emphasises differences in attainment and can lead to the stigmatisation of slow-learners and the teasing or name-calling of both slow-learners and fast-learners (Blatchford *et al.*, 2008). This suggests that the practice of streaming children by ability will lead to widening gaps between fast-learners and slow-learners – as the slow-learners fall behind, while the fast-learners progress (Duckworth *et al.*, 2009).

Although the teachers were proud about a large number of learners passing final examinations in their individual subjects, it appeared that children with disabilities and/or special educational needs did not benefit much in the race, as it was stipulated that only a few of them could proceed to tertiary education. In any case, achievement is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum – and not just tests and examination results. Thus, not all students need to learn in the same way, and not all students need to achieve the same things, but all students need to be supported to achieve according to their fullest potential (Hornby, 2012; UNESCO, 2005; UNRWA, 2013).

4.6 Other key areas involving inclusive education

What would you regard as key issues and items (e.g. human and material resources) that should be considered in an inclusion policy (guidelines), so as to ease the implementation of inclusive education in your school? Who should be involved in the development of such a policy? And why?

This section discusses other issues that emerged from the data in relation to IE implementation. These formed seven clusters: (1) material resources, (2) assessment and evaluation of disability, (3) assessment of achievement, (4) curriculum, (5) school infrastructure, (6) IE policy development and content, and (7) the external links. Drawing from previous discussions, these ideas were informed by the teachers' habitus, capital and field – as they reflected their dispositions

regarding IE and their experiences resulting from their encounters with children with disabilities and/or special educational needs within their schools.

4.6.1 Material resources

In order for IE to materialise, the teachers deemed it necessary to have appropriate teaching-aid materials. They mentioned the following items as being essential for the smooth running of educational activities within their schools: hearing aids, Braille machines and boards, projectors, teaching and assessment aid materials, video tapes, tape recorders, and computers with software that guide learners with visual impairment.

Objectified cultural capital comprises physical objects that are owned, and which can be transmitted both for economic profit and for symbolically conveying the cultural capital whose acquisition they facilitate (Bourdieu, 1990). Charema (2007) and Stubbs (2002) declare that lack of facilities and teaching materials (constituting objectified cultural capital) are major impediments to the implementation of IE. This idea is shared by Pottas (2005), who perceives access to basic services as being a big problem in many African countries. In the same vein, Abdul (2007) believes that the material resources to support children with and without disabilities, and their teachers, are essential for avoiding teacher frustration. Without appropriate resources, children with disabilities cannot access the mainstream school curriculum. Material support depends very much on children's impairments, their disabling condition, and the resources currently available in the school (Abdul, 2007).

4.6.2 Assessment and evaluation of disability

Professionals with expertise in learning disabilities can assist with a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of students suspected of having learning disabilities. These professionals from various disciplines, together with the family and the learner, make up a multidisciplinary team (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD], 2010). Assessment refers to the collection of data through the use of multiple measures, including standardised and informal instruments and procedures. These measures yield comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data

about an individual student. Evaluation, on the other hand, refers to the process of integrating, interpreting, and summarising the comprehensive assessment data – including indirect and pre-existing sources. The major goal of assessment and evaluation is to enable the multidisciplinary team to use data to create a profile of a student's strengths and needs. The student profile informs decisions about identification, eligibility, services, and instruction (NJCLD, 2010).

OFSTED (2006) states that learner academic work improves when supported by specialist teachers who have a greater knowledge, with regard to assessing and planning for children with complex needs. The interviewees asserted that they were entrusted to assess their learners' disabilities. However, they expressed concern that they lacked skills to do it with confidence. The teachers in the rural focus group shared the strategies that had worked for them when carrying out disability assessments in their schools. Their strategies focused on creating rapport with learners so that they feel free to disclose their disabilities. They emphasised the importance of confidentiality in respect of learners when asking them questions related to their disabilities. In other words, they guided learners towards self-assessment. Due to a lack of disability assessment skills, the teachers concluded that their assessment was likely to be highly inaccurate. They seemed not to trust their findings, as they claimed not to use them when planning for their lessons:

“... ke ee ke bone ka mora ho tlatša lifom tšeno re lebala hore ke ngoana o fe ea itseng o na le bothata bofe. Ke ee ke bone ha re fihla classeng re fihla re ba ruta feela ka tsela e tsoanang.” [I have realised that after filling in the forms indicating the types of disabilities our learners have, we normally do not take this information into consideration when planning for our lessons.] (P2R)

The participants also echoed NJCLD's (2010) sentiments on a multidisciplinary team for assessing learner disabilities. Based on the teachers' perspectives, the team would comprise medical doctors, pre-school and primary school teachers, parents, psychologists and professional counsellors. They also prescribed the use of learner medical records as another source of information related to learner disabilities. NJCLD (2010) believes that a comprehensive assessment of individual student disabilities requires the use of multiple data sources.

4.6.3 Assessment of achievement

Ideally, curriculum adaptation involves multiple assessment strategies. The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE) (2003) stresses that educational systems that over-emphasise academic achievement, competition and league tables, pose a serious dilemma for inclusion. The teachers pointed out that the written examination was the only formal assessment tool they had for assessing learner achievements. Quiz and oral assessments were used informally to assess learners' understanding in class. Clearly, however, this discriminated against learners who preferred other assessment methods. Therefore, it was not surprising that learners failed and repeated classes in large numbers – as the teachers have pointed out. A single mode of assessing learner achievement has the potential to leave behind (or to fail) a large number of learners – with and without disabilities (McConkey and Bradley, 2007; Westwood, 2007; Lerner, 2003). Westwood (2007) indicates that for students with significant learning difficulties or disabilities, it is important to recognise that progress can be achieved in many different ways, and from increases in academic knowledge or skills. Indeed, it was revealed in section 2.5.4, that young people with special educational needs may have issues relating to motivation and self-esteem, and that a formal recognition of their achievements and progress can help improve their confidence and self-image – thereby encouraging them to engage in class activities. The following extracts illustrate teacher viewpoints regarding assessment of academic achievements in their schools:

“... It is the written examination. Empa hee re ntse re le matichere mme re ea tseba hore kutlo ea ngoana e ntse e ka assessuoa ka classeng. E kaba ka oral questions kapa Quizz. Empa eo e leng ea mantlha ke written examination.” [Our formal assessment is through written examinations. In class, we use oral questioning and quizzes to assess learner understanding – but the formal one is a written examination.] (P1R)

“... Le mokhoa oa ho ba assessa, ba assessoa joalo ka bana ba normal fela e leng ka written examination.” [Those with special educational needs are assessed in the same way as others – through written examinations.] (P5U)

Inclusion in schools maintains that students learn at different paces and that different students may use many different pathways of learning to reach the same outcome (Pearce, 2008). Consequently, teachers are expected to gather a variety of

information from multiple sources (e.g. observation, tests) to create a comprehensive report on an individual learner. Smith, Polloway, Patton, and Dowdy (2005) propose an ecological assessment model for inclusive schools. In this model, emphasis is placed on the child's interaction with his/her surrounding environment. The model is based on the assumption that a student's performance in school is the function of an interaction between the student and the instructional environment. This includes time allocation for instructions, the appropriateness of the curriculum, and the level of tasks presented to (Smith *et al.*, 2005). Similarly, Mills and Gale (2007) maintain that the power of the environment to support children's learning, is one of the important components to consider in inclusive schools.

4.6.4 Curriculum

Though several understandings of curriculum exist, Coles (2003) defines it broadly as the sum of all the activities, experiences and learning opportunities for which an institution, society and/or teacher takes responsibility. Drawing from Vaughn, Hughes, Moody and Elbaum (2001), the curriculum is about what actually happens in the classroom and in the school – rather than what one would expect to be happening. Implied here is that a curriculum is greatly influenced by a teacher's habitus (beliefs, values, norms and attitudes), capital (knowledge and skills) and field (national and school policy on education), and it also has a direct impact on learners' habitus.

Both groups stated that their curriculum was discriminatory, making it difficult for them to adapt it to different types of learners. While they saw curriculum restructuring as an urgent matter, one teacher in the urban focus group thought that this could bring confusion to the serving teachers who were used to the old style of teaching:

“Point ea ka ke hore [my point is that] if they are included in the mainstream school, there will be a problem ea hore [that] we will have to change the curriculum ka tsela tse itseng [some how] ... It might be a problem because I have a feeling ea hore [that] we are trained as teachers in a certain way. And if there happens to be a change this year, next year and so on, it might cause a problem on our side because maybe we will not be changing as required and if re sa [we do not] change [accordingly], ho hlakile hore performance ea rona mosebetsing e tla ba tlase.... [then it is clear that our performance shall be poor.]” (P4U)

The teachers perceived practical subjects as being unsuitable for learners who could not walk or handle things such as needles (in home economics) and spades (in agriculture). One teacher in the urban focus group complained about biology final examinations excluding children with visual impairment because of containing too many diagrams that were difficult to translate into Braille. Typical comments were:

“It (syllabus) is not suitable for them. Ka tsela ea hore ha ke etsa mohlala, in agriculture mohlomong ho tlabe ho buuo ka lipoloto hore bana ba sebetse lipolotong. Joale u fumana hore motho o lutse holima wheelchair. O tla etsa joang polotong ha a sa atlehe ho lema? Le ba etsang economics ba sebelisa linalete. Joale u fumana hore ngoana enoa ha a tsebe ho tsoara matsoho ha a tsebe ho tsoara....” [For example, in agriculture learners are expected to plough and this cannot be done by a learner who uses a wheelchair for mobility. Even in home economics, learners who cannot handle equipment such as needles, cannot cope.] (P2U)

The participants in the rural focus group proposed inclusion of vocational training in their curriculum in order to meet the educational needs of learners who could be gifted in that area. Certainly, Maguvhe (2006) and Madigan (2011) call for flexibility in the , in order to address individual learner’s needs. Thus, schools must have diversified curricula that include practical skills (e.g. animal husbandry, brick-laying and crop production). It is believed that such curricula will address: areas of vocabulary development and oral-aural communication in learners with hearing impairment; self-help and daily living skills in learners with intellectual disabilities; and self-management skills and building self-esteem in learners with behavioural problems (Winter and O’Raw, 2010). The teachers also demonstrated that their school infrastructure could play a major role in IE implementation, as illustrated in the next section.

4.6.5 School infrastructure

In order to reflect a truly inclusive school, the physical environment needs to be safe and accessible to all students, including those with disabilities (Winter and O’Raw, 2010). Applying Bourdieu’s (1985, 1999) concepts in the field of the school, the general school environment equates to the realm of economic capital (DiGiorgio, 2009). Hemmingson and Borell (2002) reported that a lack of ramps, elevators and

automatic doors were the infrastructural or access barriers faced by learners with disabilities in mainstream schools. Jha (2002) also revealed that children with disabilities face infrastructural barriers when buildings are constructed, without mobility needs in mind. According to Rimmer, Riley, Wang, Rauworth and Jurkowski (2004), other infrastructural barriers that people with disabilities face on daily basis, include inaccessible routes, doorways being too narrow for wheelchair access, desks being too high, and a lack of elevators.

Teachers' discussions also revealed a lack of physical adaptations in their schools, which hindered implementation of IE – mainly by hampering access to certain facilities and activities. The teachers pointed to desks and science laboratory furniture being too high for some children, and also some buildings which effectively prevented wheelchair access. They also highlighted inaccessible recreational centres (for example playing grounds) as being discriminatory for some learners with disabilities. The interviewees seemed concerned that the terrain of Lesotho was a major barrier for the schooling of learners with mobility challenges:

“Mokhoa oo Lesotho le leng kateng, ka lithabeng ho sloppy haholo. Le litsela li mpe.” [Our country has highland areas that are undeveloped and that lack proper roads.] (P3R)

“Re lebeletse hore li classroom tsa rona, the pavement, the teaching materials hore li accommodate bohle. Joale hangata ehlile likolong tsena tsa rona ha li ahua e kare ho catereloa bana ba normal feela, e seng ba disabled. Joale ho tlabatse hore re nke bana bohle banang le disabilities tsohle.” [We have already mentioned that our classrooms, the pavement, [and] the teaching materials cannot accommodate all types of learners. It looks like our schools were erected without considering [the] accommodation of learners with disabilities. Then, it becomes difficult for us to cater for all types of disabilities.] (P5U)

Drudy and Kinsella (2009) indicate that when school buildings are unsuitable for children with disabilities, then the inclusion of such children becomes unfeasible. Due to lack of proper roads for wheelchair usage, the rural focus group teachers proposed that their schools be helped to erect boarding houses for learners with mobility impairment. They stated that this would help keep them at school and so aid their school attendance. Nevertheless, the principle of IE demands that children with

disabilities stay with their parents, like any other children (DFID, 2010; SCF, 2002; Winter and O'Raw, 2010).

4.6.6 Inclusive education policy development and content

In section 2.5.1, it was highlighted that individual schools must have policies on IE, in addition to the state legislation on this theme. Thus, all secondary schools in Lesotho should have policies responding to the education of learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs. The policy would serve as symbolic capital. In order to be relevant and effective, the policies would have to be developed within the schools – involving all stakeholders. The participants substantiated these ideas. Nonetheless, none of them had such a policy in their schools at that time. Their key stakeholders included:

- *MOET* – considered to have a funding role in secondary education.
- *Primary and secondary school teachers* – considered to have valuable information resulting from their inclusive experiences, and were referred to as the “pillars of IE”.
- *Professionals from other fields (e.g. medical doctors, psychologists)* – considered to have valuable information, skills and expertise that could benefit inclusive schools in terms of diagnosis and assessment of disabilities and support mechanisms.
- *Representatives from organisations for people with disabilities* – considered to have valuable information emanating from their disability experiences.
- *Parents* – perceived to have superior knowledge of their (disabled) children's needs and opportunities.
- *National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), LCE and NUL personnel* – considered as partaking in secondary school curriculum development.
- *Ecol (Examinations' Council of Lesotho)* – considered to prepare the final examinations for secondary schools.

Interestingly, the participants did not mention learners (with and without disabilities), community leaders and non-teaching staff (for example caretakers, cleaners, cooks and secretaries) as key stakeholders to be involved in the development of their

policies. Data showed that the teachers in both groups put much emphasis on the need for their schools to partner with the Ministry of Health through medical doctors – for the purpose of diagnosis and assessment of learner disabilities. They hoped that the partnership would provide accurate assessment of disabilities, which would improve the quality of life of children with disabilities – by enabling proper interventions such as the provision of assistive devices (e.g. hearing aids) to learners with hearing impairments. A partnership of this kind was also found in Botswana (Eustice, 2001).

The teachers anticipated that their inclusion policy would compel parents to follow up on their children's educational progress. They complained about parents' passive approach to their children's education. It was discovered that parents never visited schools (not even on a teacher's request) to discuss their children's progress. One teacher in the urban focus group proposed that this challenge could be tackled by forming parent-teacher associations. The teacher suggested that the associations would force teachers and parents to meet regularly to discuss school-related issues. It was also envisaged that the policy would strengthen the functioning of school boards (school governing bodies), improve on the safety of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, improve on school infrastructure, provide schools with support teachers, and equip teachers with skills to handle inclusive classes. In the rural focus group, the teachers thought that the policy would also help their schools to provide/cater for boarding quarters for learners with mobility impairment.

4.6.7 External links

External agencies are deemed crucial for inclusion in schools. It is argued that teachers may not always have all the capital (expertise) necessary to teach and accommodate children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Therefore, it is important to get advice and help from outside agencies (Winter and O'Raw, 2010). Data showed that teachers valued good relations with their surrounding communities. For example, in one school, suspension of learners for Sesotho speaking was stopped when the teachers realised it was crippling their relations with surrounding communities. In the urban focus group, it was even suggested that parents could be encouraged to visit schools to pass on their cultural knowledge

(e.g. cultural dances) to learners. The teachers thought that this would build and consolidate their partnership with parents. One participant stated this idea as follows:

“Hona le batsoali ba ipabolang lipapaling, ho kenyeletsa le lipapaling tsa moetlo. Re ka bitsa batsoali ba joalo ba tla koetlisa bana mona sekolong e le ho matlafatsa khokahano lipakeng tsa batsoali le matichere.” [Some parents may be good at certain sporting activities, including some cultural activities. Such parents can be invited to our schools so that they can pass their knowledge on to our students. This will build and sustain partnerships between parents and teachers.] (P1U)

Indeed, partnerships with parents is regarded as crucial for inclusion to prosper. Macfarlane (2005) stresses that parental “habitus” (their skills and knowledge) can be utilised to support school activities in order to promote inclusion. According to Macfarlane, parents are the key people in terms of supplying the schools with any information concerning their children. Parents know their children better than anyone else, and so they can provide information about how their children function in a variety of settings. Therefore, teachers are expected to establish a system where they can spend time with parents, talk to them about their children’s weaknesses and strengths, and plan effective ways of helping such children. Some researchers have identified instances of poor relationships between teachers and parents of children with special educational needs. Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) found that parents of learners with special educational needs characterised their relationships with school personnel and other professionals as being stressful, frustrating and alienating. According to Turnbull and Turnbull (2001), teachers also reported difficulties in working collaboratively with parents.

Valuable partnerships with other professionals have already been highlighted (for example, in section 4.6.6). One participant summed it up by saying: “as for me, any input from anybody is welcome...” (P1U).

The benefits of IE are discussed in the next section.

4.7 Benefits of inclusive education

Are there opportunities/benefits of inclusive education? If yes, mention and explain them.

Research demonstrates the positive effects of IE. In Zimbabwe, Peresuh (2000) found that inclusion of children with special educational needs (SEN) had long-term benefits. The author explained that children with SEN would develop social skills from being included, and that they would in turn influence the attitudes of those without SEN – thereby shaping their society's future. Moreover, IE can provide a more stimulating environment, and this environment often leads to enriched growth and learning for the learner with SEN (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion, 2010). The benefits of IE that reflected in the data were clustered and discussed under: (1) social, personal and psychological; (2) academic; and (3) physical benefits.

4.7.1 Social, personal and psychological benefits

When students with disabilities are taught in an inclusive setting, they are given the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of people, and this helps to develop relationships with others. According to Bourdieu (1990), an inclusive school constitutes a field, which is a site of struggle for positions and is constituted by the conflict created when learners endeavour to establish what comprises valuable and legitimate capital within that space. Some of the benefits of this struggle include: involvement of all children in learning activities, building positive relationships among them, and promoting their wellbeing (King, 2005). McCarty (2006) states that an inclusive school allows for the student with special needs to have role models in terms of correct behaviour. These ideas are shared by McCarty (2006), Hines (2001), and Kavales and Forness (2000).

Corroborating these ideas, the participants stated that IE could help eliminate discrimination and name calling affecting those with disabilities. They declared that it could equip normal children with skills in handling different types of disabilities. The teachers thought that children with disabilities could develop intrapersonal skills while in inclusive schools. It would also empower them, boost their self-esteem and help them to accept their own disabilities, they argued. They asserted that inclusive schools could also develop interpersonal skills in children with disabilities. Thus, it would enable them to build friendships with their non-disabled peers.

Several researchers (e.g. Rudd, 2002), report that students with disabilities form stronger friendships with their non-disabled peers when they participate and learn together in mainstream schools. Rudd believes that this may lead to less teasing and bullying of students with special needs. Cawley, Hayden, Cade and Baker-Kroczyński (2002) revealed that inclusive classrooms allow for greater social acceptance among all students.

The participants also stated that inclusion could enable children with disabilities to stay with their families in their communities. They also believed that it could stimulate a passion for nursing and teaching careers as children learn to help one another, which would be limited if they were taught in very restricted environments. One participant in the urban focus group proudly stated that IE familiarised her with Braille writing and reading. Indeed, *Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion* (2004) argues that IE allows teachers to learn new teaching techniques that can help some students. The participants also suggested that IE could empower people with disabilities, enabling them to do jobs that were reserved for their non-disabled counterparts in the past. They concluded that IE could develop united and caring societies in which everyone has a role to play.

4.7.2 Academic benefits

Ferguson, Desjarlais, and Meyer (2000) opine that mainstream schools can provide an environment in which students with disabilities and/or special educational needs have more opportunities to learn, to make educational progress, and also to improve their academic achievements. The participants stated that inclusion could enable children to help one another with academic work (see section 4.5). They stressed that while slow-learners could receive academic assistance from fast-learners, the fast-learners could also benefit in the process, as they would be able to further master the subject content. Thus, percentage passes would also improve. Participants stated that re-teaching slow-learners could also benefit those with a moderate learning pace. As noted by Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001), cooperative learning that takes place in inclusive classrooms enables teachers to provide direct instruction and additional support to students who need it.

4.7.3 Physical benefits

The participants listed some benefits of inclusion – with regard to sporting activities in mainstream schools. Teachers in the urban focus group argued that despite infrastructural challenges, high-quality sporting activities found in mainstream schools could help to nurture sporting talents in children with disabilities. One participant stated it as follows:

“Ke shebile taba ea li sports joale ka ha utla fumana hore bana banang le disabilities ha ba ea catereloa lipapaling. So ka inclusive education, bana bohle ba tla atleha ho iponahatsa hore litalenta liteng ho bona tseo ba ka khonang ho iphelisa ka tsona.” [I am looking at inclusive education from the sporting perspective. Although the sporting conditions within our schools do not cater for learners with disabilities, a proper setup would nurture sporting talents in children with disabilities – so that they could ultimately make a living out of those talents.] (P4U)

Interestingly, the teachers did not link physical activity with good health. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM, 2007) recommends that adults become physically active for a minimum of 30 minutes a day, while children from infancy and throughout school should have at least 60 minutes of activity per day. Research links physical inactivity to many serious illnesses facing modern society. It contributes to about 3% of the global burden of disease and causes major economic costs and indirect costs such as loss of productivity (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2002). Ayvasoglu, Ratliffe and Kozub (2004) and the British Heart Foundation (2000) concur, indicating that the benefits of physical activity include decreased blood pressure; decreased heart rate; reduction in incidence of diabetes; increased bone mass and strength; increased lung capacity; increased muscular strength and endurance; an increased sense of wellbeing; increased flexibility, balance and coordination; and improvements in the immune system.

The teachers also highlighted some disadvantages of IE, and these are discussed next.

4.8 Disadvantages of inclusive education

What are the disadvantages of IE?

The interviewees stated that interactions between those with disabilities and their non-disabled peers would keep reminding those with disabilities about their deficits. According to the teachers, this could result in the isolation of those with disabilities:

“... those kids *ba nang le disabilities ba qetella e eba* centre of attraction somehow Joale u tlo fungoana hore such a person does not feel part and parcel of that school, within that community *ea batho ba normal*. O qetella a hlokomela as he/she goes to school hore “I am not the same as these people.” As a result, *taba eno ka boeona e mo sitisa ho interacta hantle* despite the type of disability ...” [Children with disabilities may become the centre of attraction. Their interactions with non-disabled children could make them aware of their personal deficits, [and] so positive interaction will be compromised. Consequently, they will feel isolated.] (P4U)

Another participant in the same focus group consolidated this idea by stating the following:

“They (those with mobility impairment) are disadvantageous to them (the non-disabled) because they will be willing to play with them, but u fumane hore [you find that] they are not able to play. They will be sitting in a wheelchair u fumane hore [and you find that] the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. So, the person will feel solitary.” (P3U).

The possibility of isolation and loneliness when learners with mobility impairment attend mainstream schools was mentioned again in the rural focus group’s discussions. One teacher put it as follows:

“Haeba emong a sebelisa wheelchair, o lokela bana babang ba mophushe haeba mohlolo o mong ho tsuo a classeng ho u oa laboratory. So, bana ba mophushang ba ka teneha e be ba qetella ba mo dodga. Seno se ka etsa hore a ikutloe e kare o lahlehile.” [Children who use wheelchairs require others to push their wheelchairs when changing classes. When tired of pushing [the wheelchairs], the non-disabled children may dodge the wheelchair users – and this will make those using the wheelchairs feel neglected and lost.] (P5R)

Thus, those with disabilities would become non-disabled children’s burdens, as they will have to assist them even when they are not willing to do so.

Two of the six teachers in the urban focus group thought that inclusion would make children with disabilities the centre of attraction for others. One of these teachers stated that: “... I don’t think it [inclusion] is a good idea because *ha u shebile, those kids ba nang le disabilities ba qetella e eba* [children with disabilities end up being the] centre of attraction somehow...” (P4U). However, this idea was censured by

others who asserted that if children without disabilities were sensitised about their school mates with disabilities, things would run smoothly:

“I think it is a good idea hore ba kenele classeng le bana babang. Se kampang sa etsahala ke hore bana bano bao re nkang ba le normal, ba lokisoe ka lihloohong hore ba tsebe hore ho na le batho ba joalo. Nna mane moo ke sebetsang bana bano u tla bona hore they understand hore batho bana ba nang le bokooa ba pono, le masofe, ke batho joalo ka bona. Ke hore motho emong le emong o phuthulohile mono, mme ha ho kebe hobe le hotlakana. Taba kehore bana bano ba lokisoe ka hloohong.” [I think it is a good idea that children with disabilities learn together with those without disabilities, in the same classroom. What teachers need to do is to sensitise those without disabilities about those with disabilities. In my school, there are some learners with visual impairment and the albinos, but there is no discrimination among learners.] (P6U)

The teachers highlighted the possibility of children with disabilities monopolising some of the mainstream school services – such as occupying front seats (those with visual and hearing impairments), and their teachers giving them excessive attention at the expense of their non-disabled counterparts. Furthermore, they stipulated the possibility of children with disabilities getting excessive support while in mainstream schools, so making them dependent on others. One participant frantically stated:

“Babang ba slow-learners ba qetella ba le dependent ho fast-learners, e be ba batla ho etsetsoa lintho ka nako eohle. Ha ba sa batla ho iketsetsa letho. E ba parasites.” [Some of the slow-learners end up depending on fast-learners to always do school work for them. They become parasites]” (P4R).

The teachers stated that inclusion could also waste learning time for fast-learners. While teaching at a slower pace, in order to accommodate those who learn best at that pace, fast-learners might get bored and less enthusiastic about schooling, the teachers stated. The teachers also shared the idea that teaching at a slower pace could also result in slow-learners feeling guilty about holding back the normal progress rate of the class. On the other hand it was argued that those with disabilities could lose out academically while in mainstream schools, as mainstream school teachers could teach at a fast pace – ignoring their presence in class.

Although children are considered to be accepting of others with disabilities (National Council for Special Education [NCSE], 2010), the teachers highlighted the possibility of some non-disabled students not accepting disabled children: “[It] ... is not all of

their normal peers who will appreciate children with disabilities” (P6R). Furthermore, it was declared that inclusion could include some children with deficiencies in mainstream schools that would irritate others. The example cited was a child who might not be able to retain saliva in his/her mouth. Some relevant extracts are:

“Hona le bana bao e leng li genius, bao ke eng ke bone taba eno e ba senyetsa nako hangata. Because hona le ngoana e mong oa ka eo ke eng ke bone eka ke mosenyetsa nako le ha e le hore ka nko e’ngoe ke tlabbe ke ntse ke mofa extra work.” [Some learners are brilliant and inclusive education wastes their time. It wastes their time – despite giving them extra work.] (P1R)

“... sometimes ha re sheba [when we look into the] interaction of those who are non-disabled and those with disabilities, sometimes those who are non-disabled may become disgusted. Imagine sharing a desk with a person who is always salivating – it is disgusting and you are not able to learn well. The person is always salivating and the saliva even falls onto the desk.” (P4U).

IE is considered by its advocates to be comparatively cost-effective. UNESCO (2005:17) asserts that “[a]ccording to a recent World Bank study and a growing body of global research, inclusive education is not only cost-efficient but also cost-effective ...” Shannon (2004) questions the authenticity of this assertion (see section 2.9). Corroborating Shannon (2004), the participants in the urban focus group thought that IE was comparatively expensive with regard to hiring support teachers. One of them stated that: “... so, for me it is answering my question, though it is somehow expensive. Now there will be regular teachers and ... support teachers” (P1U). To the contrary, those in the rural focus group thought that taking children with disabilities into special schools was even more expensive – although it would benefit them. One of them put it as follows:

“Hape ke ee ke bone eka hona le likolo tse itseng libakeng tseling tse nang le resources tse hantle molemong oa bana banang le disabilities. Joale, bana banang le disabilities, hantle ba lokela ho isua likolong tse joalo. Lehoja ho le turu haholo ho isa bana likolong tseno” [I think that special schools are well equipped for learners with disabilities. It might be a good idea to take them to such schools, although they are normally too expensive.] (PR)

On a positive note, the teachers repeatedly emphasised that the disadvantages of inclusion did not justify the exclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs from mainstream schooling:

“Ha re bolele hore bana bano ba seke ba rutoa mmoho le babang, empa le ha bana bano ba ntse ba rutoa, ha maemo a sa lokisoa a thuto, u tla fumana hore ha re fihlelle lithoko tsa bona ...” [We are not implying that children with disabilities should not be part of mainstream schooling, but we are saying that reforms are necessary in order for teachers to meet their individual needs.] (P4R)

Another teacher in the urban focus group also stated this point, although she also emphasised the idea of partial inclusion:

“Ke nahana hore nna moo monyetla o leng teng, kapa li resource li le teng, e kaba hantle hore ba ithute ba le bang.... Ke itse re sa ba exclude completely, but fela eka ba ka ba moo eleng bona feela ha ho ithutoa.” [In my opinion, if we still have equipped special schools in our country, then they should enrol in such schools. But, like I mentioned earlier, they should not be completely excluded from mainstream schooling.] (P3U)

The above response re-emphasised that the teachers were still viewing their learners with disabilities through a medical model lens – in which their embodied cultural capital (their impairments), called for their placement in special schools (DiGiorgio, 2009).

4.9 Discussion

This section discusses the findings of this study in relation to the literature presented in chapter two. Bourdieu's (1983-1999) three conceptual tools of habitus, capital and field (chapter three) were used to elucidate a deeper understanding of some ideas regarding teacher perceptions of the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs in their mainstream schools. Despite being criticised, particularly with regard to limited support of it in the findings of quantitative research (Tzanakis, 2011), Bourdieu's (1985, 1999) work is considered to be a powerful tool in qualitative research – particularly for understanding human interactions in an inclusive setting (Carmen and Trevor, 2007; James, 2015; Eizadirad, 2016; Klibthong, 2012).

In this study, particular attention was given to Bourdieu's (1990) radical democratic politics, which have implications for how and from where knowledge is produced (Carmen and Trevor, 2007) – in order to understand participant knowledge of IE. Bourdieu's (1990) accounts of socially differentiated educational attainment and the

dialectic of the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality (Suminar, 2013; Eizadirad, 2016; Klibthong, 2012) also helped with data analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, Bourdieu's theory of misrecognition – “an everyday and dynamic social process where one thing ... is not recognised for what it is because it was not previously ‘cognised’ within the range of dispositions and propensities of the habitus of the person(s) confronting it” (James, 2015:100) – was found applicable in this study in terms of understanding participant perceptions of IE and the exclusionary practices negatively affecting some children in the mainstream schools.

In line with the discussions in the previous sections, habitus denotes teachers' experiences, roles, beliefs, thinking, values and dispositions regarding teaching children with disabilities in their mainstream schools. Field refers to the communities around the schools, the schools themselves, and the education system in general. Capital comes in four forms – economic, cultural, social and symbolic – and represents resources and facilities, teachers' inclusion skills and knowledge that support IE (DiGiorgio, 2009; Grenfell, 2009; Hurtado, 2010; Klibthong, 2012; Eizadirad, 2016).

This section is organised into seven major-themes: (1) teachers' theoretical understanding of IE; (2) teachers' inclusion experiences and challenges; (3) classroom practices of teachers; (4) teachers' opinions about IE; (5) key elements of IE; (6) advantages of IE; and (7) disadvantages of IE. The chapter then concludes with a summary.

4.9.1 Teachers' theoretical understanding of inclusive education

Data revealed that the teachers theoretically understood IE to imply school accommodation of different types of learners. By accommodation, the teachers implied their schools were to adapt to individual learner needs, and not vice versa. Thus, they viewed inclusion in terms of students being actively taught together in the same classroom by a mainstream school teacher, using a learner-centred approach. From their point of view, active learning involved learners participating in the schools' curricular and extra-curricular activities. In essence, these views concur with the

World Declaration for Education for All (1990), which considers education as a fundamental human right. However, the teachers also contradicted the concept of EFA, when they later advocated a conditional inclusion of children with disabilities. They stressed the need to exclude those with severe disabilities due to their schools lacking accommodation for them. They highlighted teachers' lack of skills, and limitations in items such as the physical environment, learning resources and school equipment in general – making inclusion of those with severe disabilities almost impossible.

Another important element of IE, as reflected in the data, was that children should be educated in schools that are as near to their homes as possible. Clearly, this would help reduce exclusion and transportation costs (Winter and O'Raw, 2010). Furthermore, it would empower children with disabilities – reducing discrimination against them and enabling them to stay at home with their families (SCF, 2002).

Based on Bourdieu's (1985, 1999) concepts of habitus, capital and field, it could be said that the teachers' habitus in relation to IE was influenced by their capital in terms of their skills (institutional cultural capital) and the educational resources in their schools (objectified cultural capital). It appeared that the teachers' habitus was shaped, among other things, by the relationships between their institutional cultural capital (knowledge acquired through formal education) and their cultural norms in relation to disability. Webb, Shrirato and Danaher (2002:38) indicated that human beings: "... are disposed towards certain attitudes, values or ways of behaving because of the influence exerted by their cultural trajectories." The EFA dimension of IE seemed to be what the teachers had learned from the awareness-raising campaigns, while others had also learned about it in colleges.

Although the Basotho culture of extended family advocates bringing up children as a unit, there is no evidence that suggests enrolment of children with disabilities in Basotho traditional schools, as argued in section 1.1. To the contrary, disability has been perceived negatively by the Basotho (Khatleli *et al.*, 1995): they typically see no value in educating children with disabilities. It is indicated that habitus is both a structuring structure (one which structures the social world) and a structured structure (one which is structured by the social world; Watson, 2009). Consequently,

teachers' habitus with regard to disability could have influenced their choices in respect of who should be part of mainstream schooling – leading to their exclusion of children with severe disabilities.

The findings revealed that the teachers also understood IE through the psycho-medical model. The teachers insisted on having medical doctors “diagnose” children's disabilities, in order to seek appropriate intervention. Khatleli *et al.* (1995) revealed that the Basotho used to seek a “cure” for children with disabilities – particularly boys. The teachers also considered IE to involve integration of mildly “handicapped” children. The use of the term “handicap” and others relating to specific impairments implied teachers' habitus as informed by their cultural linguistic capital, in relation to children with disabilities. For Florian (2005), the psycho-medical approach to inclusion promotes the ideology that children with disabilities fit into existing mainstream schools, which is an integrated education system. Integration in this sense implied that some children with disabilities could not benefit academically from schooling, but, rather, personal and social aspects of their lives would be fulfilled.

Moreover, while all the teachers believed that children with severe disabilities should be taken to special schools, one teacher in the urban focus group initially thought that all children with visible disabilities (irrespective of severity) were to be taken to such schools. In their discussions, the participants also asserted that children with severe disabilities were not to be excluded completely from mainstream schooling, so indicating partial inclusion. Thus, the teachers' understanding of IE fell within segregation, integration and partial inclusion. Apparently, the teachers did not seem to know that in the IE movement, special schools have either been transformed into inclusive schools or altered into resource centres for them, by applying the social model of disability – in which children with disabilities are no longer called handicapped, nor are they sent to special schools full-time (Fisher and Goodley, 2007; Ainscow and Booth, 2002).

Although the teachers claimed there was an IE policy in their country, none of them seemed certain about its content or claimed to have seen the policy document. The fact that the principals had never shown it to the teachers could imply that the

schools did not have it. IE national policy is symbolic capital of a country – that is, it governs the philosophy of education in a manner that makes a country unique, and it acts as a guiding tool for teachers to execute their duties. Thus, it is crucial for teachers to clearly understand the IE policy governing their education system, because it carries the message of what they are officially tasked to do (Kearney and Kane, 2006). DiGiorgio (2009) blames teachers' lack of awareness of an educational policy on those in power in the education system's hierarchy – and who did not deliver it to the teachers. DiGiorgio (2009) believes that some of the factors affecting education authorities' ability to deliver policy documents to teachers, have to do with lack of economic capital in the form of money. Money is perceived to help develop, print and deliver the documents to teachers. In her study on teacher experiences in implementing inclusion policy in Papua New Guinea, Torombe (2013) found that the participants were unaware of the existence of their inclusion policy, which had been in place for a very long time before the study was carried out. The researcher ascribed this to the failure of education authorities to show the policy to the teachers. Nonetheless, it is also teachers' responsibility to seek out and find relevant documents governing their duties.

Csapo (1987) concluded that IE in Lesotho meant a practice in which students with disabilities were taught in regular schools together with their peers. Seemingly, this definition focuses more on school attendance than on quality of education offered in inclusive schools. The current study corroborated this finding on the one hand, but also emphasises participation in school activities. The teachers stressed the importance of supporting children with disabilities in order to aid their participation in school activities. They highlighted some structural and curricular reforms which they hoped would make their schools more accommodative of learners with different abilities.

The insufficient knowledge of participants in relation to Individual Educational Programmes (IEP) and the roles of support teachers in inclusive schools, implied they had limited understanding of IE. It was striking to find that the teachers were unfamiliar with the roles of the education inspectorate. These are listed in the Lesotho Education Act, 2010, which is available for purchase at the government printers.

4.9.2 Teachers' inclusion experiences and challenges

The literature links disability with poverty (see section 1.0). The participants corroborated this view. In their context, poverty referred to having little or no economic and social capital. It appeared that due to poverty, most children with disabilities could not afford food, clothing or school fees. According to Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier and Maczuga (2009), children from low socio-economic status households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to those from higher socio-economic status groups. Thus, poverty can result in higher incidences of "slow-learners". It is obvious that children from lower socio-economic families who are fortunate to go to school will be stressed because they are aware they have less economic capital compared with most school mates. The teachers stated that it was difficult for them to access close relatives or guardians for children with disabilities. They also mentioned cases of ill treatment of children by their parents at home, and those children brought their frustrations to school with them. This was considered to be poor parenting that necessitated parental education about the proper nurturing of children.

To the researcher, the above-mentioned issues poverty and poor parenting raised concerns about the Basotho culture of extended families and community care for children. In this culture, people share their material possessions, including food. Every adult had a duty to instil values and respect in children (Mbambo, 2002). However, the data suggested that the Basotho spirit of *ubuntu* – "it takes a community to raise a child" (Mbambo, 2002) – had diminished due to the pervasiveness of the Western culture of individualism in Lesotho. The participants argued that the situation was exacerbated by contemporary trends of child-headed households as a result of children being orphaned or parents working far from home. Thus, most children lacked parental guidance and supervision. Children who grew up without parents were also perceived by teachers to present behavioural problems. Lebona's (2013) study "The implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in the Lejweleputswa education district" in South Africa, found that participating teachers also believed that child-headed households acted as social

barriers to learning, and this was experienced mostly with learners from informal settlements.

Bourdieu (1990) proposes that social capital forms a binding social network that includes the form of support an individual requires to be added to the capital he/she already has (Grenfell, 2009). Social capital influences the overall capital a person may possess, that enables him/her to be part of the social network, and it comes in the form of networking, communication and supporting inclusive practices – so that the person feels worthy of exercising their capital in their field (DiGiorgio, 2009). The challenges of schools in implementing IE were compounded by very little support they received from parents and government. The schools were forced to compete against their non-inclusive counterparts and this raised pressure on them – resulting in compromise in some of their inclusion endeavours (Duckworth *et al.*, 2009).

The teachers seemed concerned about pessimism in some parents and guardians regarding the educational successes of their children with disabilities. Those in the rural focus group believed that parents and guardians valued traditional schooling over academic schooling. The teachers believed it was the duty of parents or guardians to collaborate with teachers to promote the successful education of all children in the school. They thought that their Ministry of Social Development was entitled to inform parents about the benefits of taking their children to academic schools. Bourdieu (1990) considers that in the field of school, the general school environment, among other facilities and resources, equates to the realm of economic capital (DiGiorgio, 2009). Thus funds are needed to improve the general school environment. The teachers were concerned about their government's empty promises about subvention funds. They appealed to their government to pay school fees for its sponsored learners on time, to enable the smooth running of their schools' activities.

It is recommended that the ratio of learners with disabilities to non-disabled learners in mainstream schools should approximate that within their communities ("Natural Proportion"; Salend, 2001). The teachers claimed that the numbers of children with disabilities in their schools were extremely low compared to the numbers in the surrounding villages. Culturally, having a child with a visible disability was perceived

to be a great misfortune by the Basotho (see section 1.1), and thus people used to hide their disabled children in their houses. The teachers argued this could still be the case: parents could still be keeping their children with disabilities at home – so depriving them of academic education. They stipulated other possible contributory factors as being poverty and limitations in their field (the education system), which could discourage the schooling of these children. It was also thought that the educational barriers that children with disabilities faced at primary schools could prevent them from progressing and reaching secondary education.

The teachers disclosed that children with disabilities attended school at a comparatively older age because of a lack of safety and security in mainstream schools, and due to challenges related to physical access in secondary schools. It is argued that many children with disabilities become victims of exclusion when schools lack inclusion features that are needed to nurture IE (DCDD, 2006; Mpya, 2007; Charema, 2007).

Although they appeared to understand their role in helping all learners understand the content of their subjects, the teachers seemed concerned that re-teaching slow-learners took too much of their instructional time – making it difficult for them to teach all the syllabus content. In their opinion, this made learners fail final examinations, which then made their superiors unhappy. Consequently, the teachers opted for a teacher-centred method, which they believed allowed them to teach at a faster pace (but involved leaving the majority of learners with disabilities behind). Indeed, Otukile-Mongwaketse (2011) warns that when teachers are focusing on teaching for examinations, they concentrate on learners who can cope with the speed at which lessons are taught – leaving behind learners who might need extra time or help in accessing the prescribed examination-related curriculum.

Although they claimed not to have adequate skills to teach learners with diverse needs, the teachers disclosed that being passionate, tolerant and having a positive attitude when dealing with learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs, were the character attributes that worked best for them in terms of helping learners pass their individual subjects. The merits of these attributes for inclusive classrooms, are also acknowledged by Mittler (2000). The participants criticised some common

teaching practices in some of their schools – dodging slow-learner classes and monopolising teaching methods – as being unsuitable for some learners. Thus, the teachers seemed to understand the importance of catering for all learners in their schools.

Drawing from MOET's annual examination result records for JC and COSC/LGCSE, final examination results have consistently reflected science and mathematics as being the most failed subjects. It appeared that MOET had attempted to improve the pass rate in these subjects by introducing the core syllabus for learners considered to be less gifted in those subjects (slow-learners) – while others studied the extended syllabus. It was found, however, that the teachers did not know how to categorise learners so that they could be streamed into those two syllabi. Worse still, there was a shortage of classrooms and teachers, so creating further confusion for the teachers. Arguably, the arrangement of core and extended syllabi still falls short of curriculum adaptations which are recommended for inclusion.

4.9.3 Classroom practices of teachers

The participants seemed to focus more on classroom management for enabling learners to access the curriculum. They arranged classroom seating such that it would enable all learners to be part of the learning process – by seating taller learners behind shorter ones, and those with visual and hearing impairments in the front seats. They also grouped learners according to their learning paces, with some teachers separating fast-learners from slow-learners, while others purposefully mixed them in groups. The mixing of learners with different abilities was intended to maximise interactions among them so that they could help one another. Other groupings were perceived as enabling teachers to have one-on-one interactions with learners who required special attention – thereby enabling re-teaching. The groupings were also intended to prevent slow-learners from being dominated by fast-learners. Scholars encourage maximum interactions among learners with different abilities, in order to promote peer teaching (Goldstein, 2003). Penderson and Liu (2000) believe that collaborative learning involves the grouping and pairing of students for achieving academic goals.

Some teachers encouraged learners to work harder by making them compete for a tangible prize. However, these competitions were organised only as written examinations, which excluded some learners who were favoured by other modes of assessment. Some teachers claimed to maximise learning in their classrooms by employing several teaching strategies. However, this seemed to only happen by chance. The lecturing method of teaching seemed to dominate their classroom pedagogy. Sole reliance on the lecturing method for teaching learners with different learning styles, is, however, perceived by Klibthong (2012) to promote passive learning – thereby excluding many learners who learn best in an active environment. Scholars encourage flexible and differentiated teaching in inclusive schools (Maguvhe, 2006; Madigan, 2011; SCF, 2002; Westwood, 2007).

Other strategies that teachers considered useful, included giving problematic learners leadership responsibilities in their schools, giving learners more practice exercises in their subjects, providing moral and material support to needy learners to help them concentrate on their school work, and encouraging non-disabled learners to help those with disabilities with school work and in any other way possible. The teachers seemed eager to practice ability streaming – despite the negatives that they attached to it.

Corporal punishment was considered by the teachers to make learners work harder in their school work, and was also used when learners breached school regulations – such as the failure to honour the English-speaking policy. However, corporal punishment was found not only to contravene education regulations in Lesotho, but also it disempowered learners. It is not even encouraged under inclusive settings (Stubbs, 2002). Enforcing English speaking in schools appeared to be a communication barrier. A second language's dominance in schools is considered to be an obstacle to educational developments (De Klerk, 2002; De Wet, 2002; SCF, 2008; Webb *et al.*, 2004).

4.9.4 Teachers' opinions about inclusive education

The teachers' opinions about IE fell between positive and negative. They believed that IE was good because it could enable children with disabilities to contribute their

valuable skills and knowledge to non-disabled children by helping them with academic work. They also listed the many benefits that people with disabilities and/or special educational needs could enjoy in inclusive schools (such as academic assistance and a high level of sporting activities). It is believed that when teachers have positive views about inclusion, they will value all children, whatever their needs, and will interact with them in a positive manner (Whyte, 2005). Other researchers (e.g. Ali, Mustapha and Jelas, 2006), also reported on the positive opinions of mainstream school teachers in relation to IE.

An in-depth analysis of the data showed that the teachers also had negative attitudes towards IE. For example, they seemed not to favour the inclusion of children with certain types of disabilities (for example, those who could not close their mouths properly), and including those with severe disabilities. Chhabra, Srivastava and Srivastava (2010) found that in Botswana, regular teachers' views about IE were unsupportive. Similarly, Agbenyega (2007) in Ghana found that existing concerns and attitudes of teachers about IE affected their willingness to welcome and implement it. They also considered that inclusion was a good idea, but that it:

- (a) Was difficult to implement;
- (b) Required non-disabled children to be accepting of those with disabilities.
- (c) Could promote employment based on sympathy rather than the criterion of required skills
- (d) Could promote bias as teachers would have a 'soft spot' for those with disabilities.
- (e) Could promote dependency – thereby disempowering children with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

There were contradicting views about the cost of IE. The teachers in the urban focus group argued that IE was expensive with regard to hiring support teachers. However, those in the rural group thought that special schools (thus, segregation) were even more expensive for some learners with disabilities. Scholars seem not to agree on

this issue, as some think that IE is cost-effective (e.g. UNESCO, 2005), while others seem not to be convinced (e.g. Shannon, 2004). Other researchers such as Burke and Sutherland (2004), have also reported on the mixed opinions of regular teachers in relation to IE.

4.9.5 Key elements of inclusive education

Winter and O'Raw (2010) identifies 10 themes associated with inclusion. Eight of these themes (physical features, inclusive school policies, student interactions, staffing and personnel, external links, assessment of achievement, curriculum and teaching strategies) were reflected in the data. However, in the current study, some of the themes were merged, because they contained closely related information. Others qualified for slightly different titles. Two additional themes also emerged: material resources and assessment, and evaluation of disability. These themes are discussed below:

4.9.5.1 Staffing, teaching strategies and skills

The participants felt they required support teachers. DFID (2010) indicated that schools may be linked with community-based rehabilitation centres (CRB) to combat challenges related to a shortage of teachers; this was found to happen in Kenya, Tanzania and Vietnam. According to DFID (2010:13): "In such schools itinerant teachers can cost-effectively assist to produce teaching and learning materials, meet teacher shortages and helping children to develop skills such as Braille literacy, orientation and mobility". The teachers added that inclusion required their schools to partner with government, parents, psychologists, professional counsellors and medical doctors. Certainly, this partnership is important, as Dettmer *et al.* (2005) stress that a teacher cannot have all the expertise required to meet the educational needs of all students in the classroom.

The participants believed they required special education skills (Braille writing and reading, sign language, curriculum differentiation, different assessment strategies, and dealing with different types of disabilities such as handling epileptic learners), in order to properly cope with inclusive classes. While some acknowledged the skills

they had learned at tertiary level, they also highlighted that the skills that were inadequate, as they lacked a practice component. Ntombela (2009) also found that professional development used to train teachers in some South African schools was ineffectual for the implementation of IE policy, and, as a result, what was intended to happen in the classroom, did not actually occur. One participant in the current study claimed to have learned about Braille in her workplace. Perhaps one of the benefits of team-teaching is that the team members learn from one another (Dettmer *et al.*, 2005; McConkey and Bradley, 2007; Winter and O'Raw, 2010).

The teachers thought it was government's duty to ensure that every teacher was optimally equipped with special education skills. As considered this could be achieved by offering in-service training to serving teachers, while teacher trainees should be made to take special education courses in addition to their courses of speciality. Working without support teachers, receiving no support from parents or government, and with inadequate skills, the participants perceived IE as an extremely demanding venture that called for monetary incentives. They believed that incentives would encourage them to teach with more vigour.

A similar finding was made by Torombe (2013) in a study that focused on teacher experiences in implementing IE policy in two primary schools in the national capital district of Papua New Guinea. Indeed, Johnstone and Chapman (2009) and DFID (2010) support the idea of providing teachers in inclusive schools with some incentives in order to motivate them.

The teachers seemed to favour a learner-centred approach to teaching. However, they appeared not to practice it. The nature of their curriculum (too much content to be covered in too short a time) was regarded as an obstacle to learner-centred teaching. On the other hand, scholars contest that it is through properly designed learner-centred teaching, that students will learn faster (Emenyeonu, 2012) – with the result that more syllabus content is covered.

Emenyeonu (2012) considers that teachers and learners often do not understand learner-centred teaching (LCT), because they are used to the traditional style of teaching which posits that teachers are masters of knowledge. Emenyeonu had

witnessed many unsuccessful LCT initiatives as a result of learners feeling that LCT simply implied that teachers were transferring their teaching duties to them. Consequently, Than-Pham (2010) posits that in order for LCT to thrive, there must be changes in school infrastructure (by introducing teaching materials that aid LCT) and people's perceptions (moving from teacher-centred teaching to LCT).

4.9.5.2 Material resources

Insufficient material resources not only frustrate teachers, but also make it difficult for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs to access the mainstream school curriculum (Abdul, 2007). The participants considered that inclusion in their schools required access to the following items: hearing aids; Braille machines and boards; projectors; teaching and assessment aid materials' video tapes; tape recorders; and computers with software to guide learners with visual impairment. Scholars encourage teachers in inclusive schools to have knowledge of Assistive Technology (AT; Mbangwana, 2011) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC; Dada and Alant, 2002; Mpya, 2007) – in order for them to communicate with and teach learners with diverse abilities and needs.

4.9.5.3 Assessment and evaluation of disability

The teachers corroborated the view that learners' academic work improves when supported by specialist teachers who have a greater knowledge of assessing and planning for children with complex needs (NJCLD, 2010; OFSTED, 2006). The teachers revealed that they lacked adequate skills to assess learner disabilities. They also stated that, in their schools, learners used to assess themselves with guidance from their teachers. This was carried out in an environment that maintained privacy – so that learners would feel free to disclose their areas of weaknesses (their disabilities). This method of assessment was however considered inaccurate by the teachers. Inaccurate assessment of learner disabilities has the potential to provide the wrong information about learner strengths and needs – thereby placing some learners at a disadvantage in respect of their potential. NJCLD (2010) proposes a multidisciplinary team (professionals from various disciplines, the family, and the learner himself/herself) for assessing learner disabilities. The teachers also believed

that a team of experts was required for the proper assessment of children's disabilities. Their proposed team of experts comprised medical doctors, pre-school and primary school teachers, parents, psychologists, and professional counsellors. Urwick and Elliot (2010) believe that countries as poor as Lesotho need effective disability assessment systems to identify learners' needs – as the unidentified needs could be worsened by poor teaching resources in schools, which then negatively affect learner development.

4.9.5.4 Assessment of achievement

IE is considered to be a dominant and yet elusive concept, the discourses of which are about: educational responses to a diversity of learners who can benefit equally from teaching practices, pedagogies, approaches, strategies, exams and test procedures used by the teachers without bias (Pijl and Frissen, 2009; Kurawa, 2010; Runswick, 2011). The teachers pointed out that written examinations were the only formal assessment tool they had for assessing learner academic achievements. Quizzes and oral assessments were used informally to assess learners' understanding in class. On the other hand, scholars have called for flexibility in assessing learners in inclusive schools (McConkey and Bradley, 2007; Westwood, 2007; Lerner, 2003), in order to avoid bias. Apart from written examination, the assessment strategies that scholars recommend include completion of practical tasks, using Informal assessments, portfolio assessment, self-assessment, and peer-assessment.

Assessment in the inclusive classroom is considered to help by enabling the assistance of learners in the learning process – through gathering data to assist with the crafting of a well-structured programme of learning experiences to achieve the desired learning outcomes (Lubbe, 2004). Assessment can also be used for identifying barriers to learning, and for pointing to where and how these barriers could be addressed. Bower (2005) concurs, claiming that assessment brings a diagnosis of strengths and/or needs, in order to stimulate self-evaluation, to promote reflection, and to justify the formulation of an accelerated or remedial programme. Thus, the purpose of assessment in IE is to promote effective teaching and learning. Reliance on a solitary method of assessment is undoubtedly detrimental to some

learners. It is not surprising then that the teachers mentioned that their learners (mostly with disabilities) failed examinations and repeated classes in large numbers.

4.9.5.5 Curriculum

The teachers strongly believed that their curriculum discriminated against learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Most weaknesses related to the examination orientation of their curriculum, which forced them to focus their teaching exclusively on the set objectives. The teachers mentioned that their curriculum was centralised, and provided little room for teacher creativity and innovation. Curriculum centralisation may help to secure a minimum standard of provision, although at the expense of meeting individual learner needs (Otukile-Mongwaketse, 2011). The practical subjects were considered difficult to adapt to learner capabilities and needs, and the diagrams in some subjects could not be translated into Braille. The participants thought it was necessary to include vocational training in their curriculum, for the benefit of learners who were gifted in that area.

The participants revealed that the pass rate was a major criterion in determining a teacher's effectiveness, and most parents preferred their children to go to schools that produced higher pass rates. Such schools were also favoured by government, as the teachers stated that education officials always pointed to such schools as exemplars of good teaching practices. Otukile-Mongwaketse (2011) indicated that when the curriculum is defined in terms of declared aims and pre-specified objectives, the purpose of education becomes very instrumental – in that the curriculum is planned to produce a particular outcome (curriculum as an outcome/product). According to the author, those who do not fit the intended outcomes are left out, and this can lead to the creation of groups in the learning environment, which explains why participants in the current study grouped learners as slow-learners and fast-learners.

It is argued that when a teacher knows the targets that students should achieve, it becomes easier to organise the elements needed to achieve them. Such elements include appropriate content and teaching methods (Corbett, 2001). An examination-orientated system can bring unneeded stress, with improper implementation of the

elements on the side of teachers. The teachers seemed frustrated by the core and extended syllabi in science and mathematics. They seemed to understand the logic behind these syllabi in terms of catering for slow and fast learners, but claimed that the criteria for grouping such learners were unclear. They also pointed to limited classrooms and human resources, as making it difficult to teach the two syllabi separately. The core and extended syllabi arrangements did not seem to respond to curriculum adaptations in relation to inclusion (OFSTED, 2006).

4.9.5.6 School infrastructure

Winter and O'Raw (2010:57) contested that "providing a structured and predictable environment can prove useful for those students who experience difficulties with organisation, especially those with learning difficulties and developmental disabilities." The participants regarded their school infrastructure as discriminatory and inaccessible to some learners – especially those with disabilities. They pointed to furniture in their classrooms as being unsuitable for accommodating some learners (for example, wheelchair users), some buildings disabled wheelchair access, and there were also inaccessible recreational centres. In Bangladesh, Mamun (2000) ascribed the lack of infrastructural adaptability in schools to flaws in the IE policy.

Large class sizes and overcrowding pose challenges to safety and security in inclusive schools. According to Winter and O'Raw (2010), students in overcrowded schools have scored significantly lower in maths and reading comprehension compared to similar students in less crowded conditions. Studies in Lesotho primary schools have shown that overcrowding and high student to teacher ratios are major challenges for inclusion education (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009; Ntho, 2013; Eriamiatoe, 2013). Interestingly, the participants in the current study did not mention overcrowding or large class sizes as being a challenge for them. Rather, they seemed worried about their schools' declining learner enrolments. This could imply parental reluctance to take their children to these schools (as the teachers have argued), and/or a reduced transition of learners from primary to secondary schools as Ntho (2013) has maintained (see section 4.4.1).

4.9.5.7 Inclusive education policy development and content

The development of IE policies and practices is regarded as a step towards advocating for the education of children with disabilities in an IE system (Mentis, Quinn and Ryba, 2005). The participants revealed that their schools lacked inclusion policies of their own. Nonetheless, they understood that such policies were necessary and that they were to be developed in collaboration with all stakeholders in their schools. They did not mention learners, community leaders or non-teaching staff as being additional key stakeholders for partaking in the development of the policies. The exclusion of other key stakeholders could give rise to top-down decisions – resulting in scenarios which were discouraged in section 2.7.1.

The teachers stated that the policy would guide parents to play an active role in the education of their children. They thought that the policy would contain items such as parent-teacher associations that would encourage parents to follow up on the educational progress of their children. Furthermore, the policy would bind parents and teachers together – enabling the formation of parent-teacher associations for the purpose of improving the schools in terms of inclusion. Certainly, Donkor (2010) believes that parental involvement means parents supporting their children's education, and working together with the school to optimise the educational experiences of their children. Several studies have mentioned the positive results of parental involvement in the education of their children. Donkor (2010) reported that parents considered their poor supervision of their children's homework as being a main reason for their children's poor academic performance. Nyarko (2011) found that the school involvement of mothers (and not fathers) positively correlated with the educational achievements of students. Nyarko (2012) also obtained positive results when he explored the relationship between teacher rating of parent school involvement and the academic achievement of secondary school students.

The research participants believed that the policy on IE would strengthen the functioning of the school boards (school governing bodies), improve the safety and security of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, improve on school infrastructure, provide schools with support teachers, and enable teachers to be equipped with the skills needed to handle inclusive classes. In the rural focus group,

the teachers also thought that the policy would help their schools to have boarding accommodation for learners with mobility impairment.

It was argued that despite being a second language in Lesotho, English is a medium of instruction (and a passing subject) in the secondary schools. Consequently, some schools have drafted policies that enforced English speaking, in an attempt to improve the English-language proficiency of learners. Apparently, however, learners have repeatedly violated English speaking policy and disciplinary actions have been taken against them. Perhaps learners' non-compliance with the English-speaking policy could imply they were not involved when the policy was developed – as already argued in this section. It has been found that top-down policies trigger non-compliance in those who are lower in the hierarchy (Stubbs, 2002; Winter and O'Raw, 2010). On the other hand, it could also imply that learners had difficulties with communicating in English. Webb (2004) found that black learners' English-language proficiency in South Africa was often inadequate for using English as the language of learning (section 4.4.2).

4.9.5.8 External links

The teachers felt their schools should form strong networks with external agencies in order to build an assessment and support team for children with disabilities. The idea of multi-sectoral collaboration for educating learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs, is supported by DFID (2010). The author found that provision of health checks and screening, at least on entry to schools, would alert teachers to learner special needs – such as poor eyesight, poor hearing, mobility problems, malnutrition or developmental delays – thereby enabling teachers to offer suitable interventions.

4.9.6 Advantages of inclusive education

The reason why IE has become a global agenda is because it is perceived to have many benefits. The participants stated some benefits to inclusion, which were clustered into social and psychological, academic, and physical benefits.

4.9.6.1 Social and psychological benefits

The social and psychological benefits of IE that the teachers mentioned included eliminating discrimination and name-calling in relation to those with disabilities, equipping normal students with skills to handle different types of disabilities, developing intrapersonal skills in those with disabilities (such as skills to accept their own deficits), and empowering students and boosting their self-esteem – thereby reducing suicidal cases resulting from non-acceptance of personal deficits. The teachers also believed that IE would develop interpersonal skills in children with disabilities, so enabling them to build friendships with their non-disabled peers.

IE calls for children with disabilities to be educated in schools that are nearer to their homes, so that they can stay with their parents (SCF, 2002; Winter and O'Raw, 2010). The participants agreed with this idea, even though they also suggested building boarding houses for children with mobility impairment who could not commute to school. They contested that IE would potentially stimulate nursing and teaching careers among learners. They also believed that IE could develop united and caring societies, in which everyone would have a role to play. IE benefitted one teacher by equipping her with some special education skills such as Braille proficiency. It was also considered beneficial to some children with disabilities – by enabling them to do jobs that were originally reserved for their non-disabled peers.

Research evidence supports the idea that IE has psychological benefits for children with disabilities. Hannon (2005) stresses that physical activities in inclusive schools may result in a reduction of anxiety and depression, an increase in the ability to cope with a range of stressors, and also improved mood, confidence and self-esteem. Hannon maintains that inclusion can also improve the competitive spirit – in the sense that children with disabilities in integrated teams will learn the essence of competition, which is to use desire and hard work to overcome personal limitations.

4.9.6.2 Academic benefits

It was revealed in section 2.8 that an inclusive setting in mainstream schools improves academic performance for both children with and without disabilities. The

teachers considered that re-teaching opportunities that exist under this environment could benefit children with slow and medium learning paces. They also believed that academic interactions between learners with disabilities and non-disabled learners could improve the educational achievements for both. The participants did not mention the academic benefits of individualised education programmes (IEP) (Winter and O'Raw, 2010) which are considered to be the essence of inclusion. In particular, the teachers seemed unfamiliar with IEP.

4.9.6.3 Physical benefits

The teachers revealed that high quality sporting activities found in mainstream schools could help nurture sporting talents in children with disabilities. Although physical activity also has health-related benefits (ACSM, 2007; Ayvaksoglu *et al.*, 2004; British Heart Foundation, 2000), the participants did not mention them.

The teachers also highlighted some disadvantages of IE, and these are discussed next.

4.9.7 Disadvantages of inclusive education

The teachers thought that the interactions between learners with disabilities and the non-disabled learners would keep reminding those with disabilities about their deficits. This idea is shared by Salend (2001) and Preparing for Inclusion (2004). In the teachers' opinions, this would result in isolation and loneliness. It was also stressed that while in inclusive schools, children with disabilities would easily become centres of attraction to others. However, some teachers refuted this thinking – stating that this phenomenon could be avoided by raising awareness among the normal school members about those with disabilities. Fully aware that the teaching pace was intentionally slowed down in order to accommodate them, the slow-learners could regret their presence in the mainstream schools, the teachers also argued.

Furthermore, the participants thought that those children with disabilities could exploit others by demanding too much help from them. Another potential exploitation

was anticipated between slow-learners and fast-learners – where slow-learners could rely on fast-learners to do school work for them. The participants thought that teaching at a slower pace could make fast-learners bored and less enthusiastic about schooling. They also believed that teachers would give all their attention to those with disabilities – at the expense of others. They also pointed out that some types of disabilities might “irritate” and disturb other learners. Preparing for Inclusion (2004) also considers that inclusion can jeopardise the learning of students without disabilities – for example, the involuntary vocalisations of disabled learners might disturb non-disabled peers. Lastly, the teachers thought that inclusion lowered the quality of their education, as teachers could cover very little subject content, so preventing learners from passing final examinations. Both focus groups strongly emphasised that the disadvantages of IE did not justify exclusion. Rather, they called for actions to minimise the disadvantages, in order to maximise inclusion.

4.10 Chapter four summary

This chapter presented the findings of the current research. The collected data were analysed and interpreted using the reviewed literature in chapter two, as well as Bourdieu’s (1989, 1999) three conceptual tools of habitus, capital and field. Seven major themes were found in the data. The first theme involved comments about teachers’ theoretical understanding of the concept of IE. It transpired that the teachers theoretically understood this concept to imply mainstream school accommodation of learners with mild disabilities and/or special educational needs. However, they also understood IE to imply integration, as no adjustments were reportedly made in their schools in order to accommodate learners with different abilities. IE was also understood in terms of segregating learners with severe disabilities and/or special educational needs.

The second theme concerned teachers’ comments about their inclusion experiences and challenges in their schools. The experiences they mentioned included an awareness of the link between poverty and disability, ill-treatment of some children by their parents, and the negligence of some parents and guardians. Teachers also mentioned challenges with regard to the examination orientation of their curriculum that worked against their inclusion endeavours, their school infrastructural barriers

and inadequate teacher skills, inadequate funds and resources, lack of incentives, and lack of support.

The third theme involved teachers' classroom practices in relation to IE. It appeared that despite the challenges, the teachers were trying their best to educate learners with mild disabilities and/or special educational needs, by providing them with material and moral support and also by working extra hours. The teachers arranged classroom seating such that it could enable learners to help one another and also to interact with their teachers during lessons. There were very few variations in the teaching methods, with the lecturing method dominating classroom pedagogy. Teachers motivated and encouraged collaboration among learners both inside and outside class. They encouraged learners to work harder by using corporal punishment for those who seemed not to apply all their efforts to their school work, and by planning written examination competitions. Teachers also provided material support to needy learners – enabling them to focus on their school work. Learners who caused trouble in school were given responsibility roles in order to divert their energy into productive activities.

The fourth theme focused on teachers' opinions about IE. It reflected that the teachers had positive views about IE with regard to its benefits for children with and without disabilities, and for the teachers themselves with regard to the new skills they learned under inclusive settings. The teachers had negative opinions about IE and these echoed in their perceived disadvantages of inclusion – for example children with disabilities exploiting the generosity of their non-disabled counterparts. The participants also held positive-negative opinions (yes-buts): "inclusion is good, but ..."

The fifth theme involved the key elements of IE as they reflected in the data. These were clustered into staffing and teaching strategies, material resources, assessment and evaluation of disability, assessment of achievement, curriculum, school's infrastructure, IE policy development and content, and the external links.

The sixth theme looked into the advantages of IE. These were discussed under social and psychological benefits, academic benefits, and physical benefits. The

seventh theme covered the disadvantages of IE as reflected in the teachers' comments.

The final chapter, chapter 5, presents conclusions, recommendations and areas for further research – as reflected in the study.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter objectives

This final chapter concludes this study by providing a study overview and concluding remarks on the main findings of the research. It also presents recommendations for action in light of the findings, and also makes propositions for future research.

5.1 Summary of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Lesotho secondary school teachers in relation to inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs in a regular classroom environment, in the Maseru District of Lesotho. Chapter one providing the reader with a contextualisation and statement of the research problem. Furthermore, it listed the aim and objectives of the study, the hypotheses, delimitations, limitations of the study, and its significance. The chapter also briefly reviewed the research design and methodology. Definitions of terms that pertained to the study were delineated, and the research questions were presented. This study was guided by the following questions:

How do teachers in Lesotho secondary schools conceptualise IE?

- How do(es) their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack thereof) translate into their teaching approaches?
- To what degree is/are their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack thereof) similar or different?
- How do(es) their conceptualisation(s) of IE relate to the literature on this subject?

Chapter two reviewed the literature in order to develop a theoretical framework for the study. It examined Bourdieu's (1985, 1999) three thinking tools of habitus, field and capital in order to explain how teachers understood IE. The five theoretical underpinnings of IE (the psycho-medical model, the sociological response, cultural approaches, school improvement strategies, and critiques of disability studies) were

also discussed. This information on the development of IE, provided essential background for the study. The chapter explored some of the main international conventions and policies relevant to the education of children with disabilities. It discussed the strategies or models that have been used to implement IE (e.g. the Partial Inclusion Model, Full Inclusion Model, Medical Model, Ecological Model, and Rights-Based Model) – as well as the principles that form its core. The chapter also discussed the key issues that should be considered when putting IE into practice. These were discussed under the themes: IE policy, leadership, teachers' skills and teaching strategies, curriculum and assessment, communication, physical environment of schools, and school external links. Finally, the chapter highlighted some of the benefits of IE, its disadvantages, as well as some common challenges related to its implementation.

Chapter three presented detailed accounts of the research design and methodology that were adopted in the study. It was explained that the qualitative research followed an interpretivist paradigm through a case-study approach – to provide insights into the ways that teachers understand IE, and how their understanding translates into their teaching practices. Then, the chapter exposed how the schools and participants for the interviews were selected. It also showed how the collected data were processed and how the ethical issues that pertained to the study were handled. The data were analysed using the categorical indexing and discourse analysis methods. This was followed by a brief discussion of the preliminary interview. The reliability and validity issues were also highlighted, and, lastly, information about the interview sessions was provided.

Chapter four interpreted and discussed the findings of this study. A detailed summary of this chapter is presented in the next section – section 5.2. Nonetheless, it can be said that seven themes were developed from the data. The first theme, teachers' theoretical understanding of IE, revealed that the teachers understood IE to imply mainstream school accommodation of learners with mild disabilities and/or special educational needs. It transpired that the teachers also understood IE to imply integration, as no adjustments were reported to have been made within the schools in order to accommodate learners with different abilities. IE was also understood in

terms of segregating learners with severe disabilities and/or special educational needs.

The second theme, teachers' inclusion experiences and challenges, revealed the teachers' experiences that most children with disabilities came from poorer families and that some parents lacked proper parenting skills. The challenges they mentioned included centralisation of their examination-orientated curriculum that jeopardised teacher innovations and curriculum adaptations, the infrastructural barriers of their schools, lack of incentives to drive motivation, negligence of parents and guardians, and the inadequate skills of teachers in terms of handling inclusive classes.

The third theme, teachers' classroom practices in relation to IE, revealed that despite massive challenges, the teachers were trying their best to educate learners with mild disabilities and/or special educational needs – by providing them with material and moral support and by working extra hours. The teachers also encouraged peer tutoring and arranged classroom seating such that learners' interactions and learning was optimal.

The fourth theme, teachers' opinions about IE, revealed positive, negative and mixed teacher opinions about IE.

The fifth theme, the key elements of IE, discussed the eight essential elements of IE – as reflected in the data. These were staffing and teaching strategies, material resources, assessment and evaluation of disability, assessment of achievement, curriculum, school's infrastructure, IE policy development and content, and the external links.

The sixth theme, advantages of IE, placed the teachers' perceived advantages of IE into three categories: social and psychological benefits, academic benefits, and physical benefits.

The final theme uncovered the disadvantages of IE, as reflected in teacher comments. The disadvantages included: non-acceptance of those with disabilities by

their non-disabled peers, the inclusive environment making those with disabilities conscious of their personal deficits, those with disabilities monopolising teachers' attention at the expense of their normal counterparts, and the slow pace of teaching not benefiting some learners – especially those who understood things faster.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This section, in four parts, summarises the findings of the study on Lesotho secondary schools teacher perceptions of the inclusion of children with disabilities in their mainstream schools. The first part deals with teachers' theoretical understanding of IE. The second part presents teachers' opinions about IE, and the third part highlights their school practices in relation to IE. The fourth part details the teachers' proposed IE policy for their schools.

5.2.1 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of inclusive education

The views of the participants in this research were that IE means mainstream school accommodation of learners with mild disabilities and/or special educational needs. From their perspective, children with disabilities have a right to education. Their accommodation in mainstream schools was feasible only when these schools' curricula were responsive to individual learner needs, and when school infrastructure was welcoming in respect of different types of learners – including those with disabilities. This human rights perspective of IE is also advocated by the United Nations (UN) through the EFA proposal. It reflects that this perspective on IE was influenced by their institutional capital in the form of their tertiary education, which introduced them to IE and the awareness programmes that were carried out – mainly by the NGOs.

The participants also understood IE through an integration point of view, where the main focus was on attendance rate – rather than the quality of education offered to learners. Thus, IE implied mainstream school acceptance of children with mild disabilities and/or special educational needs. In respect of this perspective, the mainstream school environment remained rigid – forcing those who could not fit in, to find alternative learning centres. Thus, children with special educational needs could

only 'earn space' within the mainstream schools by improving their skills to the level appropriate for mainstream schooling. This perspective seemed to be influenced by the culture of communality of the participants, where the focus was mostly on the psychological and social benefits of inclusion (Mbambo, 2002). Indeed, the participants' traditional schooling (initiation schooling) focused on these aspects, as it aimed to transform adolescents into responsible, caring adults – to help their communities (section 1.1).

Moreover, the teachers perceived IE through a medical model – using learner impairments as their defining factor. The Sesotho language has names for different types of impairments, and such names were used to categorise people with disabilities. Recently, the use of such names has been discouraged, as they are considered to be discriminatory and to convey negativity in relation to people with disabilities. The participants acknowledged the big impact that NGOs have had within their communities, in terms of advocating against the use of such names to identify people with disabilities. However, they also highlighted isolated cases where discriminatory names were still being used to describe learners with disabilities in schools.

According to the teachers, segregation was appropriate for children with severe disabilities and/or special educational needs, because only special schools could meet their individual educational needs. Consequently, these children would have to travel away from their homes in order to access education. This implied that they would stay separated from their families for long periods, and would interact with their families only during school holidays. Considering that the Basotho have believed in bringing up children as a unit, in order to prevent one child from missing out on cultural values and norms (Lesitsi, 1990) – this arrangement implied that the child would lose out in respect of the moral aspects of life. In other words, teachers' understandings of IE were distributed across the concepts of partial inclusion, integration and segregation. Their schooling experiences and their economic, social and cultural capital, seemed to have played a part in their perceptions of IE.

Although a national inclusion policy exists, the teachers claimed not to have seen/read the document. They also seemed to be unfamiliar with its content. Thus,

their inclusion endeavours were driven more by their cultural capital with regard to their nurturing African impulses. Like any other African adult, an individual Mosotho parent is entrusted with the proper nurturing of every child at his/her disposal. Through this lens, a teacher would make it their responsibility to educate every child in their class to the highest degree possible.

5.2.2 Teachers' opinions about inclusive education

The teachers' opinions about IE seemed to be positive, mixed and negative. Their positive opinions appeared to draw from what they perceived to be benefits of IE. The benefits of IE that they mentioned included: (a) *social and psychological benefits* – for example, elimination of discrimination and name-calling in respect of those with disabilities, equipping normal children with skills to interact with those with different types of disabilities, helping those with disabilities to accept their own deficits, and empowering such individuals by boosting their self-esteem and enabling them to build friendships with their non-disabled peers; (b) *academic benefits* – for example, providing re-teaching opportunities and enabling learners to help one another with academic work; and (c) *physical benefits* – for example, developing sporting talent, even in children with disabilities.

The mixed opinions seemed to be influenced by several factors. Teachers were drawn to what they perceived to be benefits of inclusion and also their cultural commitment to nurture all children, but they were also pulled back by the challenges they had experienced during their inclusion endeavours. On the other hand, their negative opinions about IE seemed to be influenced by insufficient capital to affect inclusion, such as lack of professional skills, lack of resources, and lack of knowledge – resulting in their culture of negativity in relation to disability. Their negative opinions about IE also seemed to be influenced by what they perceived to be disadvantages of IE (for example, their inability to teach all syllabus content resulting in poor learner performance in final examinations) and the barriers within their field, such as inaccessible infrastructure, a rigid and examination-orientated curriculum, a lack of resources, and lack of support.

5.2.3 Teachers' school practices in relation to inclusive education

The teachers stated that they sorted classroom seating in a manner that allowed all learners to participate in the learning process. Their seating arrangements involved putting shorter learners in the front seats and separating the fast-learners from the slow-learners – or strategically mixing the two groups in order to maximise interactions, so enabling peer tutoring. Indeed, the essence of IE is to maximise student learning in schools by promoting learner-centred teaching and learning (Goldstein, 2003; Penderson and Liu, 2000; Cornelius-White and Harbaugh, 2010; McConkey and Bradley, 2007; Westwood, 2007; Lerner, 2003). It appeared through the teachers' discussions that Lesotho's teachers' training institutions also equip trainee teachers with classroom management skills.

The teachers revealed that they gave their learners much practice work, so that the learners could master concepts they had learned in class. Traditionally, the Basotho have used songs as another means to pass information on to younger generations (Abangwana, 2011; Lesitsi, 1990). Thus, giving learners much practice work could mean making them repeat a song over and over until they all had mastered it. Some teachers organised competitions in their subjects in order to make their learners work even harder. These competitions were arranged in the form of written tests and examinations. Drawing from the literature, the researcher that this discriminated against learners, who favoured modes of assessment other than written examinations.

It was argued in chapter one (section 1.4) that poverty is a big challenge in Lesotho and that it contributes enormously to children's exclusion from secondary schooling. The teachers stated that they have taken it upon themselves to provide needy learners with material and moral support, in order to facilitate their schooling. Indeed, their African spirit of *ubuntu* (Mbambo, 2002) helped them ensure that every child had real opportunities for attending school. The teachers also discovered that problematic learners had extra energy that could be channelled into other beneficial areas, such as performing leadership roles in the schools.

Contrary to practices that promote inclusion, however, the teachers were proud about using corporal punishment in respect of their learners. They claimed that it helped them manage discipline and to make learners take their school work more seriously. As per the literature, corporal punishment helps negate any inclusion initiative (Stubbs, 2002). Drawing from the data, it appeared that the teachers' reliance on corporal punishment for instilling good behaviour had a bearing in their cultural understanding of children's nurturing.

It was also found that the schools enforced English-language speaking, in order to improve English-language proficiency in learners. The ultimate goal was to help learners pass final examinations, as English is a subject that has to be passed in Lesotho's secondary school curriculum. Nonetheless, the English-speaking policy appeared to discriminate against learners whose low level of proficiency in English would not enable adequate communication. Even IE supporters have discouraged endorsements of such second language policies in schools (De Klerk, 2002; De Wet, 2002; SCF, 2008; Webb, 2004).

Nevertheless, teachers' efforts to effectively practise inclusion were compromised by their cultural capital and their field. Their limitations in cultural capital reflected in their perceived limited skills to teach learners with severe disabilities and/or special educational needs. This impacted negatively on their perceptions of mainstream schooling for children with disabilities – drawing them towards the medical model of disability, in which children with severe disabilities and/or special educational needs belong only in special schools. Limitations within their field included their centralised and examination-orientated curriculum that prevented them from being flexible and innovative in teaching.

5.2.4 Teachers' proposed inclusive education policy for their schools

As stated before, the teachers claimed not to be familiar with their national policy on IE. They proposed that their schools needed IE policies of their own to guide inclusion practices in the schools. It is a requirement in Ireland that all schools draft policies on responding to special educational needs (Winter and O'Raw, 2010). In the perceptions of the teachers, the policies would be developed in collaboration with

all stakeholders in the schools (although teachers did not mention students, non-teaching staff and community leaders as being important stakeholders). Indeed, it is stipulated that in order to be relevant and effective, school policies on IE must be developed in the schools, with the involvement of the entire school community and in consultation with all key stakeholders – including parents (Winter and O’Raw, 2010).

The teachers believed that the policies would benefit their schools’ inclusion initiatives in many ways – including guiding parental involvement in their children’s education, improving on safety and security for children with disabilities in mainstream schools, improving on school infrastructure, providing schools with support teachers, and enabling teachers to be equipped with the skills needed to handle inclusive classes. The teachers also anticipated that the policies would help their schools to provide boarding accommodation for learners with mobility impairment who could not commute to schools – hence increasing the number of children with disabilities enrolled in their schools. In the same manner, Winter and O’Raw (2010), Westwood (2007) and Gross (2002), believe that school IE policies can help schools in different ways – including the provision and dissemination of information to parents, stakeholders and the wider community; providing information on the development and review of IEP; outlining the role of parents in the assessment process; and arranging for strategies to deal with complaints from parents about the provision of special education in schools.

Acedo, Ferrer and Pamies (2009) believe that IE must be based on the United Nation’s principle of human rights. In essence, this study has found that the secondary school teachers’ medical model conceptualisations of IE could prevent Lesotho from achieving an EFA agenda of IE. A study in Nepal by Lohani, Singh and Lohani (2010), revealed that primary schools were reluctant to take up their responsibility to fulfil children’s right to education, because an understanding of education as a human right had not ‘sunk into’ the teachers. For this reason, the researchers concluded that a comprehensive understanding of IE was essential for the attainment of EFA goals. Teachers’ lack of awareness of their symbolic capital (the national IE policy document), their lack of cultural capital (the inclusion of skills and knowledge), their lack of economic capital (which includes the money needed to purchase resources and facilities needed to affect inclusion) and their static

curriculum, only exacerbates exclusion – thereby moving inclusion even further away for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Consequently, it is hoped that the recommendations below will help all stakeholders in Lesotho secondary education to take significant steps towards improving the implementation of IE in Lesotho secondary schools.

5.3 Recommendations

Chapter two (section 2.5.1) highlighted the values of taking into account cultural factors when planning for and implementing IE. It was argued that this would require identifying, within the cultures, the factors that harmonise with inclusion – and then build on them in order to develop IE. In support of this call, Mbambo (2002) favoured recognition of people's cultural practices when developing programmes for them. The author considered people's cultures as being their strengths and resources, which should be learned from prior to any anticipated developments. The current study reflected on the Basotho-valued communality – believing in “we” before “I”, and hence the African belief that: “It takes the whole village to raise a child” (Mbambo, 2002:7). Clearly, this can serve as a background for developing an IE programme for Lesotho. Thus, all stakeholders should play a role in the development, implementation, and sustainability of an IE programme. This will bind together all stakeholders – which will provide support and the sharing of ideas and expertise. It is hoped that this will help produce policies that can be implemented in schools, rather than generate policies that teachers do not fully understand. This does not imply that Lesotho cannot benefit from Western research and ideas about IE; rather, it means that the implementation of such ideas in Lesotho should take into consideration the Basotho's cultural, moral and ethical repertoires.

It is argued that with IE, there has to be strong policy in place at governmental level as well as in schools – that will guide the implementation of IE (Fraser, 2005). Considering that teachers are the “pillars of IE” (as the participants put it), it is imperative that they are assisted to have a hands-on experience of the inclusion policy document (their symbolic capital), so that they can gain an in-depth understanding of its content. This will guide them in relation to what they have to do in order to implement it. Grenfell (2010) attested that teachers must be provided with

the education policy, because they require it in order to be part of the field that negotiates educational activities for children with disabilities. The government, through MOET, can play a role in this regard by providing schools with such a policy document. Then, individual schools will devise means to disseminate the document to stakeholders to promote common understanding and contextualisation of the document. The policy will then guide schools to develop their own IE sub-policies that will be more relevant to their environments.

It is imperative that teachers are equipped with the appropriate skills and adequate knowledge of IE, so that they can effectively practice inclusion in their schools. When teachers lack capital, their habitus of practising inclusion within their schools becomes compromised. The participants in this research study considered that they lacked skills to effectively include learners with all types of abilities and needs. Consequently, they pleaded for in-service training programmes and improvements in teacher training institutions, so that they equip trainee teachers with theoretical and practical skills to teach inclusive classes. Several scholars have also called for teacher training institutions to improve on the practice component of IE (MacBeath *et al.*, 2006; Engelbrecht, 2006; Haihambo, 2010; Kuyini and Mangope, 2011).

Scholars such as Margolin (2011) and Buzdar and Ali (2011) stress that teachers who are sufficiently equipped with skills and knowledge make more impact on the success of IE initiatives. Petrie and McGee (2012) argue that professional development does not end at one stage; instead it is an ongoing learning process. It is recommended that teacher training (pre-service and in-service) build on teachers' cultural understanding of inclusion – as also having social benefits for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. This means that teacher training institutions in Lesotho should design their pre-service and in-service curricula, such that they build on trainee teachers' cultural knowledge and practices related to inclusion. The curricula must engage learners in problem-based learning communities, transforming their understanding and experience of learning, teaching and inclusive practice (Agbenyega and Deku, 2011). In-service training of teachers and workshops could also be organised (probably on a quarterly basis) by principals and teachers, in collaboration with MOET and NGOs. Trainers or facilitators could be sourced from relevant ministries in the government of Lesotho – for example, the

special unit centre in MOET. Trainers or facilitators could also be provided by NGOs – for example, organisations of people with disabilities; institutions of higher education; community associations; churches; and independent researchers in the field of IE.

As the teachers have demanded, their training should also equip them with skills around Braille competency, sign language, curriculum differentiation, different assessment strategies, and dealing with different types of disabilities such as handling epileptic learners. It should also equip teachers with skills to effect collaboration with relevant stakeholders to develop and implement IEP. In essence, teacher training should equip teachers with all the skills that Van Zyl (2002) identified as being crucial for IE practices (section 2.5.3). It should build on teachers' current practices (section 5.3.3) that appeared to promote inclusion. Indeed, Egbo (2011:32) states that teachers: "must understand the need for adopting authentic approaches to assessment that have written, verbal and performance components in order to accommodate preferred learning styles, differential linguistic and communicative competence, as well as cultural backgrounds." The in-service teacher training programmes should avoid the downfalls highlighted in section 2.5.3, while taking into consideration the proposals that are made by Mittler *et al.* (2004) in the same section (section 2.5.3).

Ralejoe's (2011) proposed tool for continuous formation of teachers (TCFT) schema could also be used to strengthen teachers' understanding and implementation of IE. Through this schema, representatives from different schools (teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and learners), those from different NGOs, professionals from other fields, as well as the school governing bodies (of which the principal and regional chief are members), IE professionals, secondary school inspectors, the school secretariat (in the case of church-owned schools), and anybody else who might make a valuable contribution to the discussion – would be allowed to partake in an annual discussion about IE. The discussions would be arranged at district level and each of the key stakeholders mentioned above would have one elected representative on the panel that would select the items to be discussed. A regional hall could be used as a discussion venue. Informed by Van der Merwe, Prinsloo and Steinman (2003), the discussions would be facilitated by a person selected by the

participants, would be held in a round-table form, and ideas would be prioritised and voted on. The group would then develop a plan for implementation, an action plan, and a plan for evaluation and accountability. Then, the ideas that emerged from these discussions would be incorporated into the national and school-level policies on IE. School representatives would then share information about the discussions with others, on returning to their schools. This would make all stakeholders 'own' the policies – hence ensuring that IE becomes a reality in Lesotho secondary schools. This process would also ensure that more expertise and knowledge are made available for developing sound IE policies.

This development plan could also be used at school level, in order to closely monitor IE progress at each school. At this stage, teachers, representatives of learners, parents and non-teaching staff, the chief and member of the local council, an inspector (assigned to the school), IE professional(s) and anybody else invited, would meet on quarterly basis to evaluate progress. Among other things, the group would look into classroom challenges, teachers' satisfaction, teachers' career development, appraisal systems, classroom activities (for example curriculum adaptations), and learner performance and satisfaction. The discussion would take the format described above (i.e. facilitated by a person decided upon by the participants, held as a round-table discussion, and ideas prioritised and voted on). It is hoped that this will combat challenges related to teacher burnout, inadequate skills, large teacher to learner ratios, and also demotivation.

It is worth reiterating that curriculum adaptations are impossible when the national curriculum is static, centralised and examination orientated. Therefore, it is vital that the current curriculum be overhauled in order to give teachers the autonomy to adapt it to individual learner needs. Thus, the national curriculum should focus on broader developmental areas, such as literacy, technology, sports, manual work and other issues – but should only serve as a basic framework to which individual schools would attach their own 'flesh', based on their particular contexts and needs. Clearly, this will promote the development of proper IEP, without compromising education quality, and will also enable teachers to execute different assessment methods based on individual learner capabilities.

Teachers would thereby be empowered by offering them opportunities to visit other inclusive schools inside and outside Lesotho, so that they could experience other school practices with regard to IE implementation. Put in the words of Eizadirad (2016:10): “gaining an inside perspective into a different school system and its normative teaching practices and strategies can be beneficial to teachers as it provides them with a different point of reference to evaluate their own practices”. Thus, teachers will be provided with opportunities to exchange ideas with their colleagues from other schools, which will likely offer solutions to some of the challenges they face in their schools. Eizadirad (2016:10) has argued that “gaining an inside perspective into a different school system and its normative teaching practices and strategies can be [beneficial] to teachers as it provides them with a different point of reference to evaluate their own practices”.

The international experiences of teachers in non-African countries could alter their habitus and equip them with a certain level of critical consciousness, which includes “developing deeper awareness of the self, broader perspectives about others and social issues, and seeing one’s potential and power to make a change within [their] classrooms” (Cipolle, 2010:7). If they can spend time in a non-African country (whose mother tongue is not Sesotho or English) and then visit some regions in it, then they will gain an understanding and appreciation for language as a form of linguistic capital – thereby prompting them to review their policy of forcing learners to communicate exclusively in English when in school. As Eizadirad (2016) has argued, this experience can make teachers aware and conscious of how lack of mastery of the dominant language can impact on their students, and will probably enable them to formulate interconnections between linguistic capital and their assessment and evaluation practices – recognising that too often, assessments and evaluations are highly language-based. Rodrigues (2011) argued that it is the intensive nature of teachers’ negative experiences that leads to their paradigm shift. Since international tours can be expensive, however, schools could send representative teachers so that they share their experiences with their colleagues when they return home.

It is crucial that teachers are helped to stop the use of corporal punishment against learners. It was reflected in this study that tough regulations alone cannot eradicate the practice – so it could be helpful to also follow up with education and to inform

teachers about alternative punishment methods that harmonise with inclusion. Media centres can be used to spread information about the negative impacts of corporal punishment on learners. Education on the negatives of corporal punishment could also be incorporated into teacher workshops and development programmes. However, as teachers have revealed that some parents also encourage teachers to practice corporal punishment, it would be helpful to make all stakeholders conscious of its negative impacts on children's wellbeing, and also its detrimental effects on IE initiatives.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the government of Lesotho invest more in secondary education by providing secondary schools with regular supervision, support teachers and fiscal support – to improve infrastructure and teaching aid materials. This will also help reduce teacher frustrations resulting from their failure to help all their learners to be successful in life. OFSTED (2002) believes that the quality of teaching is better in classes with support staff, than in those without them. The author also states the benefits of support teachers in inclusive schools include relieving mainstream school teachers from excessive work-loads. When emphasising the importance of funding inclusion initiatives in schools, Fraser (2005) stated that the goals of inclusive practices in schools can be achieved if there is adequate funding from government. Fraser also states that the funding should help secure resources, facilities, teacher aides and other necessities that will support and enhance IE. Johnstone and Chapman (2009) concur, claiming that if Lesotho's (1987) IE policy had greater infrastructure, there would be positive results for students both with and without disabilities. Among other things, better infrastructure implies better funding and better monitoring.

The government of Lesotho should also review and improve its scheme for assisting needy learners. This is relevant, given that in this study extremely poor children were omitted from this scheme – forcing teachers to financially assist such learners using their own funds. Ntho (2013) also noted the inconsistencies in the selection procedures for children who qualify for this scheme. In any case, the government of Lesotho cannot alone combat all the socio-economic challenges that the participants in this study have highlighted as affecting most learners (for example, being orphaned and poverty). Consequently, it is recommended that the government

partner with NGOs and other relevant departments, in order to get assistance with things such as food, specialist services including assistive devices, and also specialist expertise (Torombe, 2013). Furthermore, the government of Lesotho is encouraged to work closely with researchers and research-focused centres, in order to be familiarised with challenges, opportunities and effective practical strategies for implementing IE. On the other hand, IE researchers in Lesotho should also play an active role in promoting IE – by contributing their research-based information and expertise to advance advocacy, improvements and the sustainability of IE practices in Lesotho.

The government of Lesotho should also play an active role in training and enabling all key stakeholders in secondary education, with the skills necessary to implement the IE policy. It must also play an active role in helping schools form strong networks with external agencies in order to build an assessment and support team for children with disabilities. Villa and Thousand (2005) state that the collaboration of teachers, school administrators, parents, special education teachers, teacher aids, health workers, school board members, vocational teachers, and community resources, is important for the success of IE. This team can work together to provide learning opportunities for children with disabilities, can develop an appropriate policy, and promote a culture that facilitates IE (Naidu, 2008).

In order to motivate secondary school teachers, the government of Lesotho must offer them incentives. The teachers have stated that they have struggled to teach learners with mild disabilities and/or special educational needs. In effect, the teachers should be applauded for their efforts to teach different types of learners to the best of their ability – despite the challenges they have faced. The incentives can be in the form of appraisal schemes and/or an increase in salaries (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009).

Data have revealed that parental or guardian involvement in the education of their children (particularly those with disabilities) has been extremely low. Therefore, it is recommended that parents and guardians be helped and encouraged through government and NGO awareness programmes, to play an active role in the education of their children, by giving themselves time to visit schools on voluntary

basis – in order to establish how the education of their children is progressing. As per SCF (2002), parents of children with disabilities should be supported to work in partnership with people in disability organisations and other community-based groups to advocate for the rights to education for children with disabilities. School staff can engage in home visits, especially for parents with children with disabilities and/or special educational needs, in an attempt to initiate and sustain liaisons with parents and guardians. During such visits they can offer counselling, education and support to the parents and their children (see Vanderpuye, 2013).

Previous studies have shown that parental involvement is essential for educational success. Vanderpuye (2013) revealed that problems related to IE are likely to decrease as parental knowledge about IE increases. Belknap, Roberts and Nyewe (2001) discovered that parents had contributed to the legislation that compelled teachers to work in partnership and to seek advice from parents in decision-making processes in relation to their children. As per Lewis and Doorlag (2005), IE programmes are more effective and long-lasting for students when their parents are part of the action team. Based on the suggestion by DfES (2001) that parents need to be assisted to recognise and fulfil their role as parents – the inclusive schools in Lesotho can educate parents on their roles and how they are expected to be involved in IE. Media centres, community gatherings and school open-day gatherings, can be used to educate parents about the importance of collaborating with teachers in order to make IE successful. Some teachers proposed the formation of parent-teacher associations and inviting parents to schools to teach learners some cultural activities – in order to promote liaison between parents and schools. These ventures could be very helpful.

Lesotho's NGOs continue to play a significant role in promoting the rights of people with disabilities in the country. Writing in the *Lesotho Times* newspaper on 21 May 2015, LNFOD's human rights advisor, Matsoha-Makhoali, urged the 9th Parliament, through its Parliamentary Committees and particularly the Committee on the Social Cluster, to follow through and ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are protected. This should be done as outlined in political parties' manifestos, The Coalition Agreement 2015, and most importantly as outlined by His Majesty the King in his Speech From the Throne during the Official Opening of the 9th Parliament –

when he noted his expectation that the Disability Equity Bill would be passed into law. However, it is recommended that the NGOs (including organisations for people with disabilities), parents of children with disabilities, and also community leaders, also intensify their efforts to advocate for and raise awareness about IE in Lesotho. UNESCO (2009) indicated that organisations for people with disabilities, families and the community, have a strong role to play in advocacy – to demand that government uphold their commitment and obligation to provide education for all children, including children with disabilities. According to UNESCO, these organisations and the families of children with disabilities have considerable will and personal commitment to move forward with practical efforts, as changes will positively affect their lives and the lives of their children.

The advocacy and awareness raising campaigns could be carried out through public gatherings and the media (radio stations, newspapers and social-media packages). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) aided an awareness-raising campaign in the Maldives that might be an example of how these campaigns can be carried out. This 2001/2 campaign involved broadcasting messages about the rights of infants and young children with disabilities on radio and television, three times a day, using local children and families as actors. An evaluation of this project two years later, exhibited a direct link between the campaign and changes in public attitudes and behaviour towards people with disabilities.

Finally, it is recommended that the ratio of learners with disabilities to normal learners in mainstream schools should approximate that within their surrounding communities ("Natural Proportion"; Salend, 2001). The teachers seemed concerned that the numbers of children with disabilities found within their schools were very low compared to their numbers in surrounding communities. Therefore, it is recommended that – in addition to addressing access challenges – the government of Lesotho, NGOs and other stakeholders devise a means to encourage children with disabilities to go to school. Schools must also be encouraged to accept such children. As stated in section 4.4.2, in Kenya and the Czech Republic, schools were provided with a higher capitation grant per child with disability, for encouraging schools to enrol many such children.

5.4 Recommendations for further study

The current study investigated secondary school teachers' perceptions relating to the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs in their mainstream schools. This study was based on the premise that teacher perceptions of IE can have an impact on its implementation in schools. Further research on other stakeholder perceptions of IE is also recommended. These perceptions can also play a large role in the efforts of such stakeholders to support IE. Thus, a new dimension might be revealed if perceptions of IE by peers without disabilities, parents, principals, and all other stakeholders, were investigated.

Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate special schools' educators' conceptualisations of IE, as Csapo's (1987) study revealed that this group was reluctant to welcome government's integration proposals. Such study will be beneficiary as special schools are expected to act as resource centres for inclusive schools.

Further study is also recommended to evaluate teacher implementations of IE – by observing their classroom practices. Data from their observed classroom practices in relation to IE may be more informative, as their narratives on this issue may leave out some important elements.

The teachers were concerned about parental pessimism about the education of their children with disabilities. Since parents play a crucial role in the education of their children, future research might also investigate the causes of such pessimism.

Lastly, it is proposed that research be carried out to investigate the readiness of children with disabilities to enrol in mainstream schools. Such research should probably highlight issues related to the potential contributions of children with disabilities to their own exclusion from mainstream schooling.

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Appendix A: Consent letters' templates

2015/09/16/55719449/01/MC

Ralejoe M. C. (Mr.)
P. O. Box 14
Rothe 195
Tel: 27007642
Cell: 58057047
Email: rmalehlanye@yahoo.com

Date:

Education department
Maseru
Lesotho

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Request for permission to conduct research for doctoral degree at Lesotho secondary schools

I, Malehlanye Ralejoe, am doing research with Mbulaheni O. Maghuvhe, a professor in the Department of inclusive education, towards a doctoral degree in education (D Ed) at the University of South Africa. We have funding from UNISA Student Funding for the research. The study is entitled "THE PERCEPTIONS OF LESOTHO SECONDARY SCHOOLS' TEACHERS ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES."

The objectives of this study are:

- To investigate how the Lesotho secondary school teachers conceptualize IE.
- To identify the degree to which their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack of it) guides or informs their practical approaches to education in their schools.

- To find out how their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack of it) is similar or different.
- To investigate the relationship between the teachers' conceptualisation(s) of IE and the literature on this subject. In doing so, I hope to highlight areas of agreement or similarity, disagreement and confusion.

The benefits of this study are:

To improve the implementation of Inclusive education in Lesotho secondary schools:

Several studies have revealed some discrepancies in the Lesotho's implementation of inclusive education (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009; Eriamiatoe, 2013; Mosia, 2009; 2014). Teachers' knowledge and understanding is considered to be fundamental to a successful implementation of any related educational programme (Khan, 2011). Therefore, the Lesotho secondary school teachers (within the Maseru district of Lesotho) will be interviewed about their knowledge and understanding about inclusive education in the context of their schools and/or country.

To provide a Lesotho relevant (Afrocentric) literature about inclusive education:

This study is hoped to address some of the concerns that have been raised by some Afrocentric scholars, such as Stubbs (1996; 2002), Miles (2005) and Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011) that the published literature on the education of children with disabilities in the continent of Africa is relatively sparse and can be very misleading.

To do this research project, I will have to randomly select twelve secondary schools in the Maseru district, seven from rural regions, and the other seven from urban regions. I would like to interview the secondary school teachers in two groups of six people each based on the geographical locations stated above. These interviews are hoped to last for about two and a half hours each. The interviews will be tape-recorded. Teachers' responses will be treated confidentially.

I offer you the opportunity to read through the research paper once it has been completed. You are free not to allow this study to take place. However, your

permission will be highly appreciated. You may also withdraw your permission at any time.

Yours faithfully

Ralejoe M. C.

2015/09/16/55719449/01/MC

Response from the Education Department

I _____ have read the above information, understood it, and I consent to allow the above research to take place. I understand that I may withdraw my permission at any time.

Signature of the Officer

Date:

2015/09/16/55719449/01/MC

Ralejoe M. C. (Mr.)
P. O. Box 14
Rothe 195
Tel: 27007642
Cell: 58057047
Email: rmalehlanye@yahoo.com

Date:

Dear Principal

RE: REQUEST TO ALLOW A TEACHER TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I, Malehlanye Ralejoe, am doing research with Mbulaheni O. Maghuvhe, a professor in the Department of inclusive education, towards a doctoral degree in education (D Ed) at the University of South Africa. We have funding from UNISA Student Funding for the research. The study is entitled "THE PERCEPTIONS OF LESOTHO SECONDARY SCHOOLS' TEACHERS ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES."

The objectives of this study are:

- To investigate how the Lesotho secondary school teachers conceptualize IE.
- To identify the degree to which their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack of it) guides or informs their practical approaches to education in their schools.
- To find out how their conceptualisation(s) of IE (or lack of it) is similar or different.
- To investigate the relationship between the teachers' conceptualisation(s) of IE and the literature on this subject. In doing so, I hope to highlight areas of agreement or similarity, disagreement and confusion.

The benefits of this study are:

To improve the implementation of Inclusive education in Lesotho secondary schools:

Several studies have revealed some discrepancies in the Lesotho's implementation of inclusive education (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009; Eriamiatoe, 2013; Mosia, 2009; 2014). Teachers' knowledge and understanding is considered to be fundamental to a successful implementation of any related educational programme (Khan, 2011). Therefore, the Lesotho secondary school teachers (within the Maseru district of Lesotho) will be interviewed about their knowledge and understanding about inclusive education in the context of their schools and/or country.

To provide a Lesotho relevant (Afrocentric) literature about inclusive education:

This study is hoped to address some of the concerns that have been raised by some Afrocentric scholars, such as Stubbs (1996; 2002), Miles (2005) and Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011) that the published literature on the education of children with disabilities in the continent of Africa is relatively sparse and can be very misleading.

Your school has been selected because it enrolls even children who have disabilities and/or special educational needs. To do this research project, I will have to randomly select twelve secondary schools in the Maseru district, seven from rural regions, and the other seven from urban regions. I would like to interview the secondary school teachers in two groups of six people each based on the geographical locations stated above. These interviews are hoped to last for about two and a half hours each. The interviews will be tape-recorded. Teachers' responses will be treated confidentially.

I offer you the opportunity to read through the research paper once it has been completed. You are free not to allow this study to take place. However, your permission will be highly appreciated. You may also withdraw your permission at any time.

Yours faithfully

Ralejoe M. C.

2015/09/16/55719449/01/MC

Principal's response

I _____ have read the above information, understood it, and I consent to allow one of my teachers to take part in this research. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my permission at any time.

Signature of Principal

Date:

2015/09/16/55719449/01/MC

Ralejoe M. C. (Mr.)
P. O. Box 14
Rothe 195
Tel: 27007642
Cell: 58057047
Email: rmalehlanye@yahoo.com

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR A TEACHER TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Malehlanye Ralejoe, am conducting as part of my research as a doctoral student entitled “THE PERCEPTIONS OF LESOTHO SECONDARY SCHOOLS’ TEACHERS ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.” at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by the Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of inclusion in education is substantial and well documented. While teachers’ knowledge and understanding has been considered to be fundamental to a successful implementation of any related educational programme (Khan, 2011), several studies have revealed some discrepancies in the Lesotho’s implementation of inclusive education (Johnstone and Chapman, 2009; Eriamiatoe, 2013; Mosia, 2009; 2014). In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve the implementation of inclusive

education in Lesotho secondary schools, while at the same time can contribute a Lesotho (or an African) relevant literature about inclusive education.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately two and a half hours in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 12 months in my locked room. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 58057047 or by e-mail at rmalehlanye@yahoo.com.

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows on the next page.

Yours sincerely,

Ralejoe M. C.

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study “THE PERCEPTIONS OF LESOTHO SECONDARY SCHOOLS’ TEACHERS ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES” in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant’s Name (Please print):

Participant Signature:

Researcher Name: Malehlanye Ralejoe

Researcher Signature:

Date:

FOUCUS GROUP/INTERVIEW ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I _____ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the group discussions (focus group interviews) may be used by the researcher, Malehlanye Ralejoe, for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant,,s Name (Please print):

Participant Signature:

Researcher"s Name: Malehlanye Ralejoe

Researcher"s Signature:

Date:

Appendix B: Turnitin report



Malehlanye Constantinus Ralejoe | Ralejoe's DED thesis

Menu icon

Document preview area

DECLARATION

Name: MALEHLANYE CONSTANTINUS RALEJOE

Student number: 55719449

Degree: DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Exact wording of the title of the dissertation or thesis as appearing on the copies submitted for examination:

THE PERCEPTIONS OF LESOTHO SECONDARY SCHOOLS' TEACHERS ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

I declare that the above dissertation/thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Ralejoe m-c

18/10/16

SIGNATURE

DATE

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22

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Match Overview

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Currently viewing standard sources

View English Sources (Beta)

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2	www.ncse.ie	2
Internet Source		
3	researchcommons.wai...	2
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4	www.eenet.org.uk	1
Internet Source		
5	ir.canterbury.ac.nz	1
Internet Source		
6	researcharchive.vuw.ac...	1
Internet Source		

Page: 1 of 363

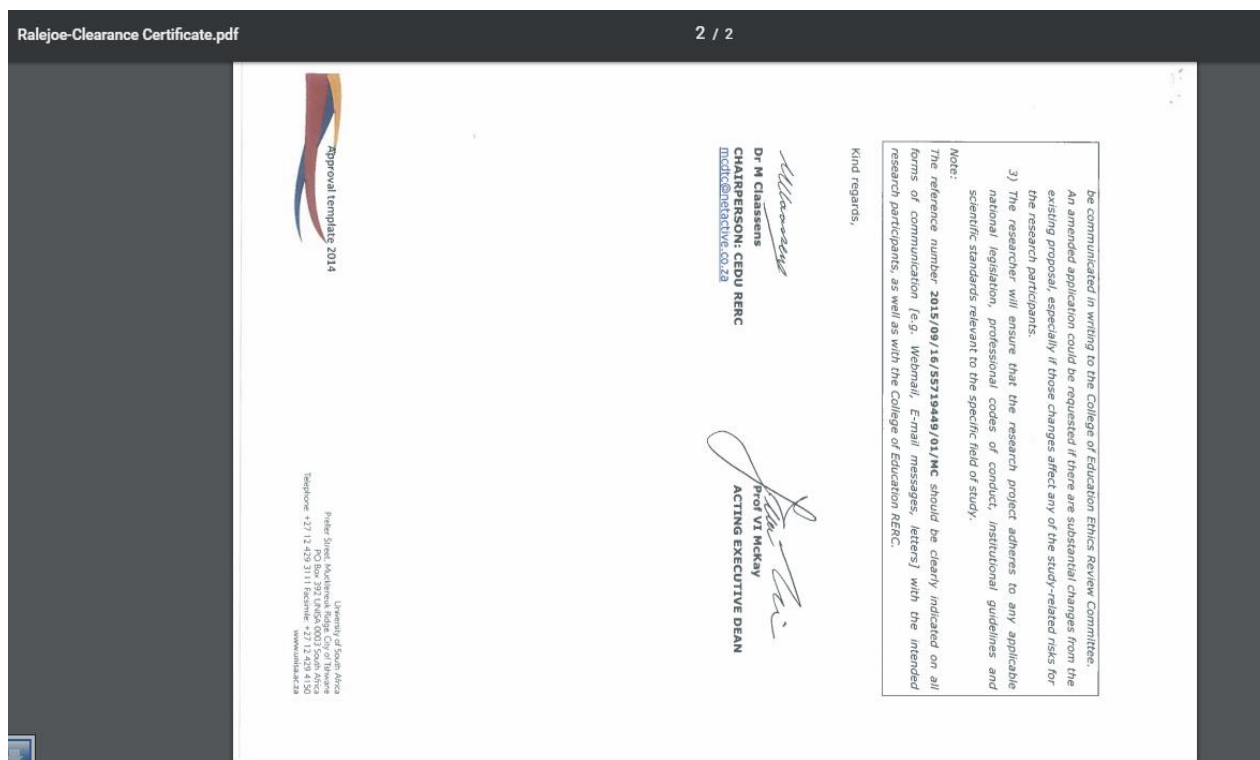
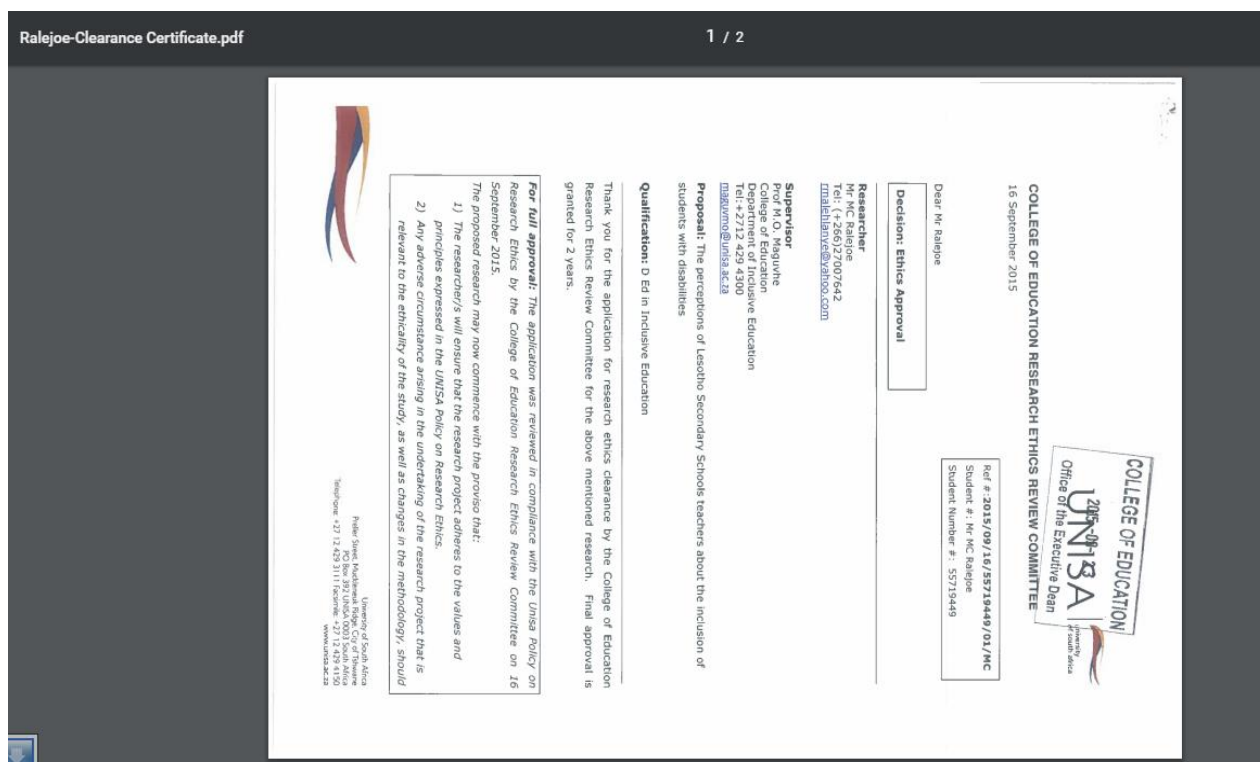
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Appendix C: Ethical clearance



Appendix D: Professional editing certificate

COPY-WRITING

Specialist Consultants

Date: 29/11/2017

CLIENT: Ralejoe Constantinus Malehlanye

A substantive language editing service was rendered for a doctoral thesis entitled:

The perceptions of Lesotho secondary school teachers about the inclusion of students with disabilities

Amendments related mainly to grammatical and other linguistic aspects, in order to improve the clarity and readability of the document. However, 153 constructive remarks and queries were made in MS Word track changes, in order to help the author improve the document. Furthermore, a short editing report was supplied by email, which, inter alia, summarised the issues of concern.

It should be noted that as professional editors we are not responsible for the academic accuracy of the text which rests entirely with the author. Furthermore, we are not responsible for ensuring that all our recommendations are implemented by clients.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr D.A. Barraclough

Full Member: South African Professional Editor's Guild (PEG), and of the South African Translators Institute (SATI)



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www.copy-writing.co.za